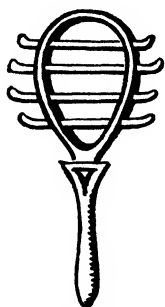


**A SHORT HISTORY
OF SEX-WORSHIP**



MEXICAN
FERTILITY
SIGN



SISTRUM
OF ISIS



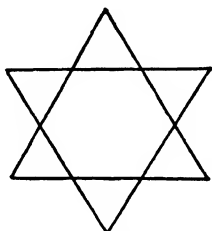
COWRIE
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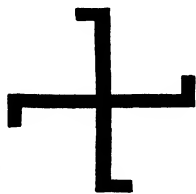
THE
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THE SHIELD
OF DAVID



THE
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THE SYMBOL
OF VENUS



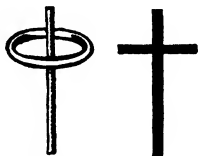
THE
MYSTIC
FIGURE
TEN



THE LOTUS
FLOWER



THE CRESCENT
MOON



FORMATION OF
CROSS



LINKINHORNE CROSS
CORNWALL



HOLED STONE, MADRON

SYMBOLS

A SHORT HISTORY OF SEX-WORSHIP

BY
H. CUTNER

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INTRODUCTORY FOREWORD

By MAURICE CANNEY

(Author of *Givers of Life*, etc., Emeritus Professor of Semitic Languages and Literatures in the University of Manchester, etc.)

THE subject with which this book deals is one which very soon confronts every serious student of the history of religions, particularly of the religions of the Greeks, Romans, and Semites. It concerns even students of the Bible, because, as F. A. Spencer has ably demonstrated in his illuminating book *Beyond Damascus: A Biography of Paul the Tarsian* (1935), the background of the story of the Apostle Paul in the New Testament needs to be studied in the light of certain phallic ceremonies which had spread from Athens to Tarsus, Paul's birthplace, the capital of the Roman province of Cilicia; and the Old Testament includes among the canonical Hebrew writings a work which, as the late Professor Morris Jastrow, Jr., explained in his charming book *The Song of Songs: Love Lyrics of Ancient Palestine* (1921), is recognized widely to be a collection of Palestinian love-lyrics.

Jastrow was well advised in calling the collection known as Canticles Palestinian rather than Hebrew, because Hebrew may not have been the original language. As Wetzstein and Dalman have shown, the lyrics have analogies with Arabic wedding-

songs still popular among the Arabs in Syria and Palestine, and, let it be added with Jastrow, with the love-songs of ancient Egypt.

As regards these lyrics in *Canticles*, Jastrow writes truly as follows: "Folk-lyrics are intended for the simple folk among whom they originate. They are for home consumption, not for literary export, and unless we can throw aside our sophisticated spirit of critical analysis we must abandon the hope of entering into the joy and charming simplicity of such a collection as the *Song of Songs*." He adds that to read folk-lyrics through obscurantist and out-of-date spectacles is to see obscenity where there is merely naïveté, and that, if we inject a moral interpretation as an escape from supposed obscenity, "we add pharisaical obtuseness to an exhibition of vitiated taste." These words are capable of wider application. I think they represent the point of view of the author of this book.

Outside of Palestine the collection of Arabic stories known as "The Thousand and One Nights" (or, in popular speech, *The Arabian Nights*), literal translations of which have been kept under lock and key in public libraries, provides another example of this class of literature, being notoriously full of sexual allusions.

The strange thing is that a purely secular collection like *Canticles* should be included in the canon of sacred Hebrew and Christian writings. This shocked most of the Jewish Rabbis of the Talmudic Age, and, with the remarkable exception

of Theodore of Mipsuestia, some of whose works previously considered lost were discovered in recent years in Syriac manuscripts by my friend, the late Dr. Alphonse Mingana (*Woodbrooke Studies*, Vol. V., 1932; Vol. VI, 1933), the early Christian Fathers and theologians. It is not surprising, therefore, that these two bodies took refuge in the curious fiction of an allegorical interpretation.

Phallic worship has, of course, by no means been confined to the Near East. It has, indeed, been widespread. Mrs. Sinclair Stevenson, who was a Christian missionary in India, in her book *The Rites of the Twice-born* (1920) has emphasized the fact that the worship of phallic symbols has been found, and still is found, all over the world. Its presence has been proved in Sumatra and Java, in the Celebes, on the slave coast of West Africa, on the Congo, and in many other places of what she describes as "primitive" culture.

The author of this book, who is a pictorial artist as well as a serious student of religious symbolism, has in my opinion rendered a real service by providing students and enlightened readers with historical information which is not easily accessible to those who cannot afford bulky volumes or are not well equipped to read them when they are composed in French or in German. He offers also many conjectures of his own, for which, of course, he alone is responsible.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THE problems of religion and its origins have always been a source of discussion—sometimes very embittered. I cannot hope to escape controversy with this essay on Phallicism, but I should like to make it clear that I have tried to avoid extreme views on a very much debated question. The Bibliography gives most of my authorities, but I am greatly indebted to Dr. M. Canney, M.A., and Dr. M. Gompertz, M.A., for valuable hints and suggestions. I must also thank Mr. John Rowland, B.Sc., and my anonymous proof-reader for so carefully revising the proofs. Needless to add that, apart from my authorities, I alone am responsible for opinions and deductions expressed in this book.

H. C.

CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE
INTRODUCTORY FOREWORD	vii
AUTHOR'S PREFACE	xi
I. THE WORSHIP OF FERTILITY	1
II. THE GODS OF ANCIENT EGYPT	7
III. PHALLICISM IN THE BIBLE	19
IV. SEX-WORSHIP IN THE ANCIENT EAST	43
V. THE CULT OF VENUS	48
VI. SEX AND RELIGION IN ANCIENT ROME	65
VII. INDIA'S PHALLIC FAITHS	83
VIII. EARLY EUROPEAN FORMS OF SEX-WORSHIP	101
IX. SEX IN CHRISTIAN HISTORY	119
X. SEX-SYMBOLISM IN RELIGION	155
XI. SEX-WORSHIP AND SCIENCE	198
BIBLIOGRAPHY	217
INDEX	219

CHAPTER I

THE WORSHIP OF FERTILITY

ONE of the most curious as well as one of the most instructive chapters in the history of religions is that dealing with phallic worship—the worship of the generative powers in man and Nature. That sex has played a very great part in all religious cults has long been known to those who have investigated the question; but their discoveries have, for many centuries, been carefully hidden from the faithful in the interests of established religion. The widespread curiosity in sexual matters, expressed openly nowadays in books, lectures, and art, has called attention to primitive cults where the actual worship of the male and female principles was an everyday occurrence, and where special feasts were constantly held in honour of the gods and goddesses of fertility.

The whole sexual question is now being studied in the light of past history as well as of modern taboos; and, since religion is still being taught as something emanating from God for the special benefit of mankind, the study of early beliefs and practices should be particularly illuminating.

At what period man became a thinking being in our sense of the term is lost in the mists of time, but it can be safely premised that directly he

began to ponder on the mysteries of his own self his sexual nature must have caused him the greatest wonder. It may have taken him many thousands of years before he idealized this sexual urge and called it "love," but, in spite of all our modern discoveries, a new-born babe is still almost as much a mystery to us as it was to primitive man.

It was not, however, merely the birth of his own kind which caused him to wonder; the birth of all sentient beings, the blooming of flowers, the abundant harvests, the heavily laden fruit trees, were all mysteries which he could not explain. And so, coinciding perhaps with his own sex-puzzling, came his questioning of all Nature, and in particular the great heavenly orb which we call the sun.

And here, at the outset, it may be as well to point out that man's imaginings must have led him at the very dawn of history to see two clear principles in the universe—the Good and the Bad. Everything that gave him pleasure was good; everything that gave him pain was bad. The conflict between the two gave rise to thousands of stories, of legends and myths, many of which, even at this day, form the leading ideas of our own novels and romances. The recital of the conflict between Osiris and Typhon (or Set) must have been as thrilling for the ancient Egyptian as is the conflict between the murderer and the detective in our latest crime-fiction for us.

For primitive man his tremendous struggle for existence centred on *fertility*. Good crops and

flocks meant food in plenty; big families meant many workers—and, indeed, many hunters and fighters. Thus everything that made fruitful the earth, as well as his women and animals, was *good*. Everything that prevented the earth from giving forth food, or his animals from breeding, or his women from having children, was *bad*; and countless were the stories woven round these things, their meaning hidden from us, or from those of us who do not understand the symbols or the metaphors in which they are encased.

Man seems to have used symbols early in history. Symbols even now form part of our daily life in many ways, whether they are the markings on paper we call printing or the signs which call the attention of motorists on our highways to cross-roads and the like. And throughout all early religious cults will be found numerous symbols pointing, as clearly as the noonday sun, either to phallic worship or to sun-worship—for the two cults will often be found side by side.

Attention must be directed to one other fact. In the past, religions—except perhaps the most primitive—were essentially *mystery* religions. The priests and the initiates were the only people allowed to know *all* the secrets; the “vulgar”—that is, the common people—were offered only those things which the authorities thought they ought to know, and no more. To this day man shows his love for a “mystery,” whether it be a special kind of club which only members are allowed to attend, or a cult like Freemasonry, the

members of which have to take solemn oaths that they will never divulge the tremendous secrets enshrined in their imposing brotherhood.

Thus symbols and mysteries came to form part and parcel of almost all religions, and in particular they formed the greater part of primitive historic cults. The priest then, as now, felt himself (or at least claimed to be) a higher being in direct communion with the Unknown, symbolized by whatever was at the time the fashionable god in the shape of some statue or animal. The earnest worshipper, thousands of years ago, thus felt himself in direct touch with his deity, whether it was a statue of Osiris or Siva, of Adonis or Venus, of Jupiter or Priapus, just as the modern believer, kneeling in devotion before a statue of Mary or Jesus—or even of some saint—feels he is fulfilling his particular God's purpose in all its entirety.

All over the world will be found temples and statues and remains of every kind pointing to worships which, after investigation, prove the wide extent of both the sun-myth and the phallic cults in religious and magical practices.

Some of the facts now to be detailed may be accounted "shocking"—that is, indecent or obscene. But it should not be forgotten that the question of "indecent" is one over which nothing can yet be definitely settled. In England many things are considered obscene which are certainly not thought so in other countries. The daily sight of women's knees shocks us far less now than did the sight of women's ankles only a few

years ago; and contemporary stage-plays, as well as famous pictures, deal quite openly with subjects that would have drawn a gasp of horror from even broad-minded people in Queen Victoria's day. A large number of men and women now refuse to concede that the human body is indecent, or that nakedness is shameful. Sex is not something to be ashamed of, and the fig-leaf is openly laughed at. For primitive man sex, as such, was no more shocking than it was and is for animals—though *licence* and *promiscuity* have almost always been condemned by the thoughtful.

Phallic symbols, in their earliest form, could have caused no more condemnation than the symbols of other cults. It was only when sex-worship became degraded (though this word is used but tentatively), affecting men, women, and children, that serious objection could be made—as, indeed, it was made. But even here one must be careful. Sexual degeneration has only comparatively recently been examined in anything like a scientific way, and we are still far from forming strictly correct opinions on the subject. Sex is (after food) man's strongest necessity. It has formed man's character in the highest as well as in the lowest. It has dominated the greatest as well as the least endowed of the human race. And if in our time it has been sublimated in all sorts of directions it had, in those far-off days of human history, an open expression which modern civilization now at least hesitates to permit, and we must ask why. If knowledge means anything

to us, we must not shrink from facing facts—in particular, historical facts. And the fact of sex-worship can be seen directly one opens the book of primitive history. The cult primarily meant *fruitfulness*, and so will be found, as has already been indicated, associated with the worship of the sun.

Let us begin with Egypt, that great and mysterious land, the history of which goes back thousands of years before our era. Almost everything that can be called religion will be found therein.

CHAPTER II

THE GODS OF ANCIENT EGYPT

It seems almost a useless task to disentangle the histories of the many gods and many beliefs which pervaded the whole of Egypt in ancient times. One of the primary deities was Osiris. He is perhaps the best known of them all, but there were quite a number of others, all of whom played their part in building up a powerful priesthood and keeping the people in subjection.

The story of Osiris is intimately bound up with that of Isis and Horus (the precursors of our Virgin and Child), and for the benefit of the "vulgar"—that is, the people—the following story was widely published and repeated as a true history, in much the same way as Bible stories are claimed, by our own priesthood, to be veritable historical truths vouched for by God himself.

Osiris was originally an Egyptian king who taught his people agriculture—organized fertility—and he travelled abroad spreading the same knowledge all over the world. On his return he found that his brother Typhon (or Set) had done his best to cause sedition in the country. Typhon was anxious to rid himself of his brother altogether, and so well did he plot that he managed to get Osiris enclosed in a coffer, into which he poured

boiling lead. He then threw the coffer into the Nile. This happened when Osiris was twenty-eight years old, or, as some accounts state, in the twenty-eighth year of his reign. Believing that the dead must be buried with proper rites—otherwise they cannot rest—Isis, the wife of Osiris, who was terribly grieved, set out to find the coffer. She discovered it in spring-time at Byblos, Phœnicia; but, wishing to see her son Horus, she hid the coffer in a secret place before visiting him. Typhon, however, hunting by moonlight, discovered it and tore the body into forty (or twenty-six or fourteen) parts, which he dispersed to the winds. Heart-broken, Isis went on a voyage of discovery again, found each part but one, and raised a monument in honour of Osiris where each was discovered.

Unfortunately the sexual organs were never found; so Isis had a wooden representation made: a *phallus* or *lingam*—or, as Lemprière puts it, *simulachrum ligneum membri virilis*—and she ordered special attention and solemn worship to be made to this part. It is said that the wood of which the phallus was made was that of the fig-tree, which perhaps suggested the use of the fig-leaf in the story of Adam and Eve.

Thus the phallus became part and parcel of the Egyptian religion. It was held in the greatest honour and veneration by the people—without, it must be added, causing any “impure thoughts or lascivious reflections”—and its worship lasted well into the fourth century of the Christian era.

Dulaure considers the whole story to be the

invention of priests to account for the prevalence of phallic worship in the country, but several considerations must be weighed before any decision can be reached.

First of all, there is the discussion as to whether Osiris was a sun-god or a moon-god. There can be no question, however, that he mainly symbolized the sun, the great source of fertility on earth. Sir J. G. Frazer looks upon him as a vegetation-god analogous to Adonis and Attis, but he also admits that the myth may represent the daily appearance and disappearance of the sun. Yet the numbers twenty-eight and fourteen, somehow associated with Osiris, may confirm the opinions of those other writers who connect him with the moon. The truth may well be that when the sun was considered the prime agent of fertility Osiris was the sun; when the moon was made responsible for the propagation of animals and the growth of plants (as believed by Plutarch, for example) he became the moon. And, in addition, he became so confused with the story of Ra, who certainly is a sun-god, that it is difficult to say what Osiris finally represented to the myth-believing mind of the Egyptian.

Whatever is the truth, it can be said with certainty that the lingam—the lost part of Osiris—was universally worshipped by the inhabitants of Egypt. As a symbol of fertility, it must be admitted, none better could be found.

The word *phallus* may have taken its origin from a Semitic word, the Phœnician, spelt in Hebrew *palash* or *palas*, and meaning in New Hebrew

(cf. Assyrian) "he breaks through or presses into." The word persists in other languages, as *palus* in Latin, *pfahl* in German, and *pole* in English. Mr. J. B. Hannay (whose conclusions should be received with caution) goes even further, as he considers that the name Saul was deliberately changed into Paul so as to infer the same meaning. In Sanscrit it is *phal* or *phala* or *phul*, which all cover the same idea—that of a fully ripe fruit or pod ready to eject the seed which it contains. How far symbolism may reasonably be carried it is difficult to say, but symbols for the phallus are often considered to be found in spires, towers, stumps, poles, spears, arrows, and many similar things. As for deities, here are some which are supposed to represent the lingam (or phallus): Priapus, Dionysus, Hercules, Siva, Osiris, Jupiter, Baal, Ashur, and Mahadeva.

The Egyptians certainly worshipped a bull as a symbol of fertility. He was called Apis; and Lemprière points out that the Egyptians believed that he represented both Isis and Osiris—the soul of the latter, in particular, wishing to dwell in the body of the bull, an animal which was of such immense service to agriculture in general. Apis was really a sign of the Zodiac, the sign of *Taurus*, in which over 5000 years ago the sun appeared at the time of the vernal equinox. Spring-time, when all Nature was so attractive and promising, was looked forward to by mankind in the past with perhaps even more joy than now; and many were the happy celebrations of early man in honour

of the glorious sun. The priests made it their business—as now—to direct the festivities. They made a living bull the object of adoration as a god. Apis, the most celebrated of all the bull- or ox-divinities, was worshipped at Heliopolis; Onuphis or Bacis, a bull form of Ra, at Hermantis. Even among the Greeks we find the bull Cadmus. It is also interesting to note that the Jews in the desert are said to have made themselves a golden calf; while one of the most celebrated monuments of Mithra shows him offering a bull as a sacrifice. Cows were almost as universal as bulls in this connection. Io was changed by Jupiter into a cow, and Iphianassa was also metamorphized into a cow because of the jealousy of her sisters.

Later, when the sun was found to be in the sign of the Ram at the vernal equinox, it was the ram—or goat—which was deified; and one finds the ram associated with the sacrifice of Isaac in the Bible. Hence we get such expressions as the Lamb of God, connected with the Deity. Before the beginning of the Christian era the position of the sun at the vernal equinox moved into the constellation of Pisces—Fishes—and this may be an explanation of the close connection of fish with Jesus in parts of the four Gospels.

Herodotus tells us that the goat was considered to be a symbol of the god Pan and was worshipped in Egypt under the name of Mendes. Pan, it need hardly be pointed out, is always represented with the thighs and legs of a goat, and seems to spend most of his time chasing nymphs. He was con-

sidered a god of fertility and was worshipped, says Lemprière, with the greatest solemnity all over Egypt. At Mendes there was always a sacred goat kept with solemn sanctity, like the bull Apis. From the generative organs of these two animals, and not from those of man, thinks Dulaure, comes the worship of Priapus, which name seems to have been derived from Apis.

Dulaure says that *apis* means *high, elevated, powerful*, while *pri* means *principle, first source*; therefore Priapus can be translated as the *principle of fertility*, or *first source*. It should be noted that the word *apis* in Latin means a bee, but Webster says that the word is derived from the Egyptian *hapi*.

So powerful was the influence of these animal gods that we find parts of them added to Jupiter and Bacchus—as well as to Pan. Jupiter is often pictured with ram's horns, while Bacchus, in addition to the horns, is shown, like Pan, with the thighs of the animal. Moses was depicted by Michael Angelo with horns, and those who contend that there is a similarity between the stories of Moses and Bacchus will perhaps wonder whether the great artist also believed in this similarity. It should be added that the word *horn* has even to this day a phallic significance.

Horns were considered as symbols of the active force of the sun; and in many pictures the cornucopia has always represented abundance. A ram's horn is still blown, accompanied by special prayers, on the Jewish New Year's Day in syna-

gogues; and some days after is celebrated the harvest Feast of Tabernacles, when the fruits of earth and tree are particularly honoured.

Tremendous importance was attached to the sexual parts of the bull-god Apis by the Egyptian priests, as it was their desire to represent to the utmost the wonderful fructifying powers of the sun; and the parts of the goat-god were treated with the same care. The bigger its generative organs, the more highly was the bull or goat esteemed. Symbolic representations in wood and stone began to be made of the lingam by itself. At a much later period it was attached to a human figure, but quite out of proportion. Herodotus, who was certainly initiated into the Egyptian mysteries, claims that there was a particular reason for this, but he was not at liberty to divulge it.

The goat [says Diodorus Siculus] being so strongly sexually inclined, it was considered that his genital organ, the instrument of generation, should be worshipped; as it is through this comes the birth of living beings. But not only by the Egyptians but by many other nations is the male sex organ worshipped as the principal object of generation.

Thus the ancients recognized the cause of fruitfulness in their own bodies and that of animals; and they also saw the part played by the sun in the fertility of the earth. It is not surprising, therefore, that so many of their gods were at the

same time sun-gods and phallic gods. For example, Osiris, as has been shown, lost his generative organs. Attis (Atys) was either castrated or he castrated himself. Adonis was wounded (or killed) in his sexual parts by a boar. Saturn, one of the earliest sun-gods, cut off the sex organs of his father Uranus. Bacchus (or Dionysus) was a phallic deity as well the god of wine; Bramah, Vishnu, and Siva were all castrated or castrated themselves. Even Odin had to submit to the same fate—proving how this question of human fertility was so strongly linked up with that of the sun—the explanation or allegory being connected with the loss of the creative powers of the sun during winter.

The bull Apis was adored with what may be considered indecent rites, as was the goat of Mendes. Herodotus even claims to have seen criminal intercourse between the goat and a woman in front of the worshippers; while Plutarch remarks that this was by no means the fault of the goat. And so far-reaching was this cult of divine animals—in all probability the primal significance of *fertility* was eventually lost sight of—that the worship can be found in Greece, Rome, and India. The goat in India was actually called Mendes; while in Rome, Ovid tells us, when Juno was invoked to make the Sabine women fruitful, the worshippers heard the oracle speak from the sacred forest of Mount Esquilin: “Let the women of Italy be impregnated by a goat.” This did not quite suit the Romans, so they proposed to the

sterile women that they allow themselves to be beaten by thongs made of goat-skin. This is one of the earliest recorded feasts of flagellation. It took place on February 23, and young people, mostly quite naked, formed a procession through the town, flogging each other, the women, as well as the men, thoroughly enjoying the proceedings.

It should be added here that what is known as "Black Magic"—the cult so long associated with witches and witchcraft, and still practised to-day—is in all probability the obscene rite of Mendes. The figure of the "Evil One" is almost always that of a goat, and descriptions handed down by mediæval chroniclers seem to show very little change from those we read of in the old classical historians.

So much for the cult of the bull Apis and the goat Mendes. The question as to the actual origin of phallic worship is far more difficult to decide. Some authorities consider that it originally came from the Assyrians and the Phœnicians, not from the Egyptians. This may be so, but it is in Egypt where will be found, or where were found, the largest number of monuments dedicated to the cult. The phallus there received the greatest honour, as can be seen, for example, from one of the descriptions of a phallic procession given by Herodotus. He points out that, instead of carrying a large figure of the phallus alone, the Egyptians attached the organ to small bodies in such a way that it could be moved by a cord. The great day was March 25 (about our Easter), when a procession in honour of Osiris paraded through the

towns; and Plutarch tells us that on this representation of their great sun-god three phalli were fastened. It is an interesting but highly speculative problem—this question of *three*, the Trinity. Inman is sure that the Trinity was symbolized by the trefoil or any leaf similar to the shamrock; and it requires very little imagination to see in the male sex organs another possible solution of the problem.

The French traveller, Vivant Denon, gives, in the history of his voyage to Egypt, an engraving of a carefully embalmed phallus found on the sexual organ of a female mummy. This was too large to be human and was in all probability that of a sacred bull. Many Greek vases found in tombs also show either representations of the phallus or indecent scenes. The exact reason for associating a phallus with death is unknown. It may, however, be due to the desire to ensure fertility in the underworld.

Small figures of the phallus, made of porcelain in different colours, were found in Egypt in large numbers and were certainly carried as amulets. In addition, various figures of crosses are found everywhere on Egyptian monuments and tombs, and are considered by many authorities as symbolical either of the phallus or of coition. Baring-Gould is of the contrary opinion and refuses to identify the cross with the phallus. The cross with the ring or oval, the *crux ansata*, is generally held in the hands of Egyptian gods, and is supposed by those who refuse the phallic interpretation to

mean the conferring of immortal life on human beings after death. In Egyptian tombs the *crux ansata* is found side by side with the phallus.

The question of their connection is still hotly disputed. That the cross was a sacred sign long before Christ is supposed to have died upon one is conceded by Baring-Gould, for he believes that the cross "formed a portion of that primeval religion, traces of which exist before the whole world among every people." He does not seem to realize that the cross, whether phallic or not, is simply one of the symbols of the sun-myth, the universal religion of mankind—a religion to which the modern devotees of "sun-bathing" look uncommonly like returning. And, being part of the sun-myth, it is just as likely to be symbolic of the phallus; for the sun was considered the great symbol of fertility on earth equally with the representation of the sex organs of man. Payne Knight insists that the cross in the form of a T "served as the emblem of creation and generation before the Church adopted it as a sign of salvation"; and Godfrey Higgins was of the same opinion.

The figure of Bacchus or Osiris is found on many monuments, endowed with an enormous phallus in his hand fecundating the earth. The farther one goes back into antiquity, the more frequently one finds the phallus represented singly and unattached. Later came two or three phalli united together; then appended to some human figure; and, finally, attached to a figure of a sun-god like Osiris, with the fertility motive indicated above.

Phallic worship persisted in Egypt till the fourth century, when Christianity became more or less the dominating religion. Bishop Theophilus obtained permission from the Emperor Theodosius to destroy the Egyptian idols; followed by a horde of monks, he destroyed as many as he could, demolished temples, and founded monasteries in their place. He razed to the ground the famous Temple of Serapis—the temple dedicated to the union of Osiris-Apis—and in so doing, it should be added, he caused horror and consternation among the surrounding people. But his action, right or wrong, settled the fate of phallic worship in Egypt, and, it must be confessed, gave the death-blow to most forms of phallic worship wherever its influence prevailed. Yet, from an historical point of view, they are still worth being studied in all their variety.

CHAPTER III

PHALLICISM IN THE BIBLE

THERE can be little doubt that the Bible contains many traces of phallic worship, though the uninitiated may find it very difficult to discover them. The Bible as we now have it is the result of revision by a succession of editors. Nobody knows who made these revisions, or indeed who wrote the original versions. The Hebrew of the Old Testament is particularly difficult to translate, and it is certain that our English translators have glossed over many difficulties, sometimes in the interests of so-called decency. Even in the present "original," as is admitted by C. D. Ginsburg, one can trace the hand of the final editors who have tried to hide obvious phallic meanings to certain words. How much actual history is in the Bible it is almost impossible to say, though there is no reason to doubt that many passages in the historical books may be derived from actual occurrences. In the other parts it is often difficult to separate the allegorical from the real—if there be any real. Modern criticism has had a devastating effect on the composition of many of the books in the Bible; it has also sorted out the different ideas in their composition. It should not be forgotten that, as is pointed out in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*,

most of the names of persons in the Bible are *artificial*. They each appear only once, as a rule, in the Old Testament. There is only one Moses, or Abraham, or David, or Solomon, or Lot, or Noah, and to understand these names is to understand a little how the Bible was composed.

What was the actual origin of the Jewish race it is hard to say; few modern authorities are willing to concede that the Bible story of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is true. But, whatever the Jews were at the beginning, it is obvious from the severe laws and penalties found in the Pentateuch that they were guilty not merely of ordinary "sin," but of all kinds of sexual misdemeanours. They were constantly worshipping strange gods, and it was only by the threat of the severest punishments that they at last became reconciled to Jehovah. A large portion of their laws certainly deals with sex and sexual disease, emphasizing the awful results—"even to the third or fourth generations"—if the laws were not rigorously kept. It is a commonplace of modern Biblical criticism that, though these laws were supposed to have been given to Moses to be imposed upon his followers in the wilderness, they are now recognized as being late additions—most of them unknown to the kings of Judah and Israel. Indeed, whatever can be gathered as genuine history from the Old Testament seems to show a constant desire on the part of both the Israelites and the Judahites to worship "strange gods" in "high places," and it has entailed great research on the

part of many scholars to discover what these terms meant.

The gods of ancient Israel were certainly many, and the people seemed to have excessive fondness for those indubitably connected with phallicism. Take, for example, Baal Peor (Numbers, xxv. 3). Baal or Bel means in Hebrew, as the orthodox Parkhurst says, *ruler*. Baal was certainly worshipped by many ancient nations, and belongs to the gods of the sun-myth. Peor, according to Parkhurst, means a *wide, gaping mouth*. According to Inman, it means the "opening of the maiden's hymen." Baal Peor may thus mean "The Lord of the opening," and the god later became identified with (or was) the god known as Priapus. The worship of this phallic deity was severely forbidden by Jehovah, and the killing of twenty-four thousand back-sliders from the true worship of Israel was a salutary if awful lesson (Numbers, xxv. 5-9).

The story of the worship of the golden calf is also an example of Jehovah's wrath. Three thousand of the *naked* worshippers were slain by the children of Levi. As emphasis is laid upon the word "naked," it is clear that the worship of the calf was definitely phallic. The nineteenth-century Hebrew scholar, Dr. Kalisch, claims Baal Peor as the principle of generation *par excellence*; at the festivals celebrated in honour of the god virgins were accustomed to yield themselves. Moreover, women wove hangings (according to 2 Kings, xxiii. 7) for the grove in the "houses of the

sodomites that were by [or in] the house of the Lord."

The word translated *grove* in our Authorized Version is in the Hebrew *Asherah*, and it means literally "pole." According to Inman, this word and Ashtoreth (the Phœnician goddess) are identical and typify the female (? male) organ of generation. Payne Knight, in his work on the *Worship of Priapus*, gives illustrations of the "Asherah" taken from images which in his day could be seen above the doorways of certain churches in Ireland, and may perhaps be seen in many on the Continent even now. The "hangings" were in all probability used to shut off part of the Temple from the general public, for reasons which must be plainly apparent.

In spite of the fearful visitations of "plague," etc., the lamentations of Jeremiah, Ezekiel (in xvi. 17, for example), Hosea, and other "prophets" prove how difficult it was to wean the Jews from phallic worship. Even the great Solomon sinned in this way. The people insisted upon building images and groves upon high places. The "images" were almost certainly phallic male, and the "groves" phallic female. It is difficult to form any other opinion.

Once it is seen that the story of Adam and Eve is symbolical, its phallicism can be recognized. Why should their nakedness be so strongly emphasized? The serpent, with its capability of erection, is clearly phallic, and, as found on many ancient and Egyptian monuments, undoubtedly symbolizes male erection.

Even the Ark may be considered symbolical of woman; while the anointing of the stone upon which Jacob slept is exactly like the anointing of the lingam in India—a purely phallic rite. Forlong claims that the Jewish practice of circumcision is a remnant of phallic worship; in fact, it is not difficult to prove that the male organ is held in the greatest veneration in the Old Testament. Abraham swore his servant by saying: “Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my *thigh*” (Gen. xxiv. 2). The word “thigh” is a euphemism for the phallus; and there are many passages in the Pentateuch showing that a man must be sexually perfect before being admitted into the community. No one has yet discovered the *real* origin of circumcision; but of course it may be that the rite was insisted upon finally more in the interest of cleanliness than from any connection with phallicism. It was in vogue among many nations long before Israel (as in pre-dynastic Egypt), and is now practised by many native races who have never heard of the Bible. Perhaps the custom originated as a savage mutilation to distinguish the tribe; or, as Elliot Smith thinks, as a preparation for marriage; but, whatever is the true explanation, it does add one more indication of the Jewish preoccupation with sex.

J. B. Hannay has discussed phallicism in relation to the Bible in very great detail, and he detects it almost everywhere in the Old Testament record—which, by the way, he considers a Roman forgery of late date. He claims that the word “Jew” was

originally written IU, the letter I (or the symbol for *one*) representing the male, and the letter U the female element. He finds the same letters in the name of Jesus, which, he says, should be written IESU—I and U representing the two sexes, the letters ES, the Hindu word for *flesh*. Whether Hannay is right or not, it is interesting to note that Webster gives *es* as meaning *corpse*, *carrion*, and *bait* from old Anglo-Saxon.

The Hebrew word translated Jehovah is IHOH (or IHVH). I and O may be male and female symbols—as well as the written symbols for the “rod and almond” (see Jeremiah, i. 11). Hannay declares that Hebrew is a purely artificial language, the final redactors of which, basing their alphabet on more or less contemporary alphabets, made theirs as little like the “rod and almond” as possible. The difficulties of connecting phallicism with common words or symbols must be admitted; but the fact remains that the IO is found in many unexpected places. Our J should almost always be written I, our U is often written V, while O and V (or O and U) seem to be favourite letters in the names of pagan deities. For example, IUper for Jupiter, IOno for Juno, IOve for Jove; and we get IOb for Job, and IOseph for Joseph.

Most people are, of course, unaware of the meaning underlying common words and the names for persons and places. But obviously there must be *some* meaning in words like Mary, or Abraham, or Joshua (IOshua), or Jerusalem, or Constantinople. These words could not have come of them-

selves out of a void. They are not mere accidental babblings. How did we get such names? If they are translations of "foreign" words, how did they get into the foreign languages?

It is true that a baby, in its first effort to call its mother, might easily gurgle out something resembling "ma," and certainly some similar sound for mother can be found in many languages. And it is true also that words which at first sight seem dissimilar can often be proved to have, so to speak, a common denominator. Yet the fact that right at the back of many religious words may be seen a phallic idea would certainly give a shock to pious people who look upon any manifestation of sex as sin. The fact that some educated persons who know something of the history of language consider Hebrew as the first or primeval language, given by God to man in man's earliest state, does not now matter much. But until recently millions were quite assured that Hebrew was *the* Divine language—spoken by Eve to Adam, by the Serpent to Eve, and by God to the first man. The Old Testament is supposed to have been originally written in Hebrew; and so strong has been the influence of priesthood and tradition that Hebrew is still by the orthodox looked upon not as one of a group of similar languages but as something unique and almost too holy to be approached.

Now it may be said at once that there is no actual *evidence* that the Hebrew of the Bible was ever a spoken language. It is, of course, asserted that in a particular epoch it was spoken, but no

real proof has been adduced. If Abraham ever lived, was it his language? Was it the language used by Isaac to Jacob, by Jacob to Joseph, and did the small band of Jacob's family, as they increased after Jacob's migration into Egypt, speak it among themselves and teach it to their children? Was it a fully formed language as we have it now in the Old Testament—and as it is declared to be by some modern apologists—when the Israelites so hastily departed from Egypt under the leadership of Moses?

Even the source of the word "Hebrew" seems in doubt. There are many opinions and conjectures as to its derivation. In any case the fact remains that the Hebrew language is the one in which most of the Old Testament as we know it was written. How much of it was written in pre-Hebrew times, and in what language, have not yet been discovered.

The "original" Hebrew is unpointed—that is to say, it is without vowels. These were added by the Massorites somewhere about the year A.D. 600, and in all probability the additions have changed the meanings of some of the words. Modern criticism is by no means ready to accept the various parts of the Old Testament as having been written by Moses, or David, or Jeremiah, or Joshua, as the case may be. On the contrary, it considers that the Pentateuch, for example, is a comparatively late compilation and, in the form we have it, certainly not written by Moses. Many of the various books were undoubtedly written under the influence of the people among whom the writers were living at

the time, and edited later under the influence of various parties or priests. The oldest extant Hebrew copy of the Old Testament is dated about the year A.D. 900, and, as the Greek version supposed to have been made about the year 150 B.C. differs considerably from it, it is almost impossible to say what had been originally written.

As for the Jews themselves, though they early played a great part in the history of the world, according to their own story, they seem to have impressed their contemporaries hardly at all. Homer never mentions them, though he is supposed to have written about the year 800 B.C.; while Herodotus, whose history is a veritable epitome of ancient events, and who flourished about 480 B.C., seems also to have been unaware of the Jewish race.

Although some modern writers declare that the Hebrew of the Pentateuch is fully charged with Egyptian influences, not only in the delineation of manners and customs but also in language, Inman, who made an intensive study of the subject, categorically declares that no Hebrew cognomen "is traceable to the Egyptian language." There is no trace either, in Jewish theology, of Egyptian gods as such, though there are abundant traces of the influence on Hebrew nomenclature of the myths of many other nations.

It is very remarkable [says Inman] that the Jews, living as they did in such close proximity to Egypt, whose religious systems

were complex at a very early period of written history, should appear to know so very little, if anything, of the Mizraite faith. Though predisposed to find in Judaism much of the fables current on the banks of the Nile, I have only discovered traces of Egyptianism in very modern times. Almost all the Hebrew forms of idolatry, legends, laws, language, etc., seem to have come from Phœnicians, Greeks, Babylonians, Assyrians, Persians, and Medes.

When Hebrew words are analysed they are found to consist of consonants only—an arrangement which opens the way to a variety of significations through the addition of different vowels. Take BG in English, for example. It can mean BIG or BAG or BUG or BOG or BEG—all quite different meanings. A careful examination of the Hebrew text proves how marvellously responsive it is to this kind of treatment.

Ginsburg, in his *Cohemoth*, speaking of variations of the text, says: "Changing letters or words for those which are similar in appearance or sound is one of the rules whereby the many meanings of the text are obtained."

In his famous work, *Ancient Faiths Embodied in Ancient Names*, Inman made an exhaustive analysis of hundreds of the Hebrew words of names and places, and he has little difficulty in proving that at least one of the meanings attached to particular words has a phallic significance. He also claims

that many of these words are adaptations from the Greek, glossed over or "euphemized." The last editors of the Hebrew Biblical narratives took care to change, if possible, any word of extreme coarseness—which was often done by changing the vowel points. In our own Authorized Version many expressions, gross to Western eyes, were also "euphemized." Some examples have already been given.

Modern Biblical critics are almost unanimous in assigning two sources to the Old Testament—the Jehovistic and the Elohist. It is a fact that a large number of names are, as Inman says, "characterized by the use of the word Jah" and others "are compounded with Al, El, or Il." The names formed from Al, El, or Il almost invariably have reference to "the Almighty," "the Sun," or "the Phallus." A few made with Jah have phallic significance, but it should be added that more names survive compounded with El than with Jah. Some examples will prove interesting for study.

It has already been pointed out that the word spelt Jehovah in English has in Hebrew only four letters—IHOH or IHVH. Modern writers now generally spell the word Jahveh. As remarked previously, Hannay claims that the "dagger and ring" or "rod and almond" (that is, the letter I representing the male organ, and the letter O representing the female organ, "the door of life," sometimes represented by the letter U or V) were signs used by all nations and were changed into Hebrew char-

acters in the Bible without losing their distinctive significance. Both in *Jeremiah* and in *Numbers* will be found references to the "rod and almond." In addition to the names given on a previous page, we have IOnah and IOel—for the letter J is quite modern and probably derived from late German. It is interesting to note, however, as Moor points out, that the Hindu word for the female sex organ, which we spell Yoni, should really be spelled IOni—which he himself does, as a matter of fact, in his book. He adds :—

It is the immediate type and symbol of Parvati, the consort of Siva, in her character of *Venus Generatrix*, the goddess so properly invoked by Lucretius. . . . All natural clefts and fissures and caves and hollows and concavities and profundities, anything, in fact, *containing*, are fancied typical of her as well as tanks or wells or such a symbol as O. Pyramids, obelisks, cones, are Sivaic, and of such is the symbol I. IOni was her vocalized attribute and Linga his. (E. Moor, *Hindu Pantheon*).

With a different vowel-point the IO can be changed into IA or IAH—that is, in English, JAH. There is a mass of evidence that some word like this, or with the same sound, was used by the Assyrians and Babylonians—the two nations among whom the Jewish race is supposed to have lived for many years in captivity. From Fuerst's *Hebrew Lexicon* Inman quotes :—

The very ancient name of God Yaho which is preserved only in proper names as an enclitic, written in the Greek IAO, appears, apart from its derivation, to have been an old mystic name of the supreme deity of the Semites. In an old religion of the Chaldæans, whose remains are to be found among the new Platonists, the highest divinity enthroned among the seven heavens, representing the spiritual principle and also conceived as a demiurge, was called IAO, who was, like the Hebrew YAHO, mysterious and unmentionable, and whose name was communicated only to the initiated. The Phœnicians had a supreme god whose name was trilateral and secret, and his name was IAO. This Phœnician YAHO, a knowledge of whom spread further, represented the sun-god (*sol*, ELIOS) in a fourfold variety of senses. He represented Baal, whose image was set up by Manasseh, Suidas, Dionysus, and Adonis. The identification of IAO of the heathen Semites with YAHA, or Jehovah of the Hebrews, is already in Tacitus, Plutarch, Julian, etc.

Parkhurst, of whose piety and orthodoxy there can be no doubt, also agrees that IHVH was well-known to the heathen, and points out that the "Greeks had their exclamation of grief, IOU, and the Romans of triumph, IO, both of which were originally addresses to Jehovah." Jah, Parkhurst claims, is no abbreviation of IHVH, but means

He who is. As the letters I and O were symbols of the two sexes, and as these letters can be found to persist, no matter how disguised, in ancient names of gods, it is not surprising that they are found in our own Jehovah, a survival of sexual significance to all who have studied phallic worship.

The word Paul can also be shown to have a phallic significance—according to Hannay. The same sound, as has already been shown, is in our Pole or Pall, and it is nearly the same as phallus or pillar. The “pillar” was generally a phallus, and drawings or photographs of some that exist to this day have often been reproduced.

The Hebrew word AB means “father” in Phœnicio-Semitic languages. In Hebrew, says Parkhurst, it means “to swell, heave, distend”—a phallic significance. In Levitah’s *Exposition of the Massoreh* are the following words:—

Our Rabbis of blessed memory say that all the words which are written in the Scriptures cacophonically must be read euphemistically. The rule which obtained is that every cacophonous expression was changed for an euphemism so that man might not utter anything indecent.

Ginsburg cites several of these alterations in the *English Bible in Relation to the Ancient and Other Versions*. There are a large number of Hebrew words which began with the letters AB, and many of them can quite easily be shown to have some connection with phallicism.

The word Adam is extremely interesting. In Hebrew it means, as well as "man," "red" or "ruddy," and modern Hebraists are inclined to see in the word an Egyptian origin, as the soil in Egypt is red. Inman points out that the phallus on the images of gods in India was (and still is) painted red. In Hebrew a man was *Zachar* (cp. Arabic, *dhakar*, "male organ") and a woman *N'keba*, "something perforated."

The word AL or EL (with which is compounded *Elohim*) Inman considers "the sun typified as a phallic emblem as a sign of his creative power." EM means "mother" (compare Mir-yam, Englished Mary). Ammen is the name of the wife of Siva. It is also found in our Amelia or Emily. Ammon (Genesis, xix. 38) may come from the Egyptian god Amun. Jupiter was called Jupiter-Ammon. It will be remembered that in the Greek legend Hercules gave to Omphale, of whom he was enamoured, his "staff" or "club" and his lion's skin, while he put on her cloak and sat at her spinning-wheel—thus becoming, Hannay says, double-sexed in both cases. There is a famous statue of Omphale dressed in the lion-skin and carrying the club; and there can be little doubt that it represents a double-sexed goddess. Omphale is, no doubt, composed of the two words "om" (womb, woman) and "phale"—that is, phallus.

Asher is probably the Assyrian god Asshur—that is, the Vedic Mahadeva, the symbol of male creative energy. The word Ashtoreth found in Kings, xi. 5 undoubtedly comes from a common

root with Astarte, Esther, and Ishtar, and it is like the name given in Syria to Venus. Payne Knight says that Astarte is Cybele, "the universal mother of the Phrygians." Pillars and columns were erected in her honour. There can be little doubt that she represented the female part in reproduction. At the same time, the clerical writer in the *Encyclopedia Biblica* denies that the surviving representations of the Ashera on gems and seals are phallic.

The word *Assir* meaning "he unites [? sexually]," is perhaps derived from the Phœnician deity Asher or Osiris, and is a symbol for the masculine emblem. *Baal* (plural, Baalim) means "lord, master, husband." Inman considers its meaning the same as that of the Hindu Mahadeva. And referring again to Peor—that is, Baal-Peor—even Jerome (on Hosea, iv. 14) admits that this god is the same as Priapus, the most obscene of the Nature-gods.

Baal-shalisa means "the Trinity"—that is, the complete male, symbolized, as Inman thinks, by the triangle of David. *Bab-el*, the famous tower, he claims was a phallic symbol, as were originally the famous round towers in Ireland. *Beten*, mentioned by Joshua, was a town of the Asherites, and actually means "the womb" or "the female organ."

There is a large number of words formed with *Beth* (compare our Bethel) which contain hidden allusions to sex and which are fully discussed in Inman's work. He shows how the Jewish writers

absorbed the phallic ideas of the deities believed in by their pagan neighbours. Other words cited by him show what he calls a "punning contrivance"—like the word *Decar*, which means (in New Hebrew) either a "ram" or the "membrum virile."

A word like *David*, which means "beloved," can be pointed differently in Hebrew, *Doved*, and it then means "to love erotically"—not without significance when applied to the famous Jewish king. Compare also *Dudaim*, "love apples," "mandrakes," that extraordinarily shaped plant which used to be so extensively used as the male symbol.

Fig-leaves were carried in the procession in honour of Osiris; and in Greece and Rome fig-wood was used from which to carve the phallus. The fig resembles the womb and, with its stem, the sistrum of Isis. The pomegranate and the almond were also used as symbols of the female.

Dag, "the fish," also means "to be fruitful," and the word *Nun* "to sprout, to increase." Parkhurst gives its meaning as "to propagate." The fish was often used by the ancients as a symbol on their monuments, as it was connected with the worship of Aphrodite—that is, of Venus. When members of the Roman Catholic Church fast on Fridays, they eat fish instead of meat. Friday is called *Dies Veneris*, Venus's Day. Inman considers that "the fish symbolizes the male principle in an active state." Its shape suggests the almond; its open mouth is also suggestive, and Christian

priests still carry on their heads something like a fish's head, called a mitre.

The words *Jacob* and *Esau* have also an interesting significance. Inman considers that the struggle in their mother's womb was symbolical of the worshippers of the lingam differing from those who preferred the yoni. Esau is preferred by his father, and is represented as being rough, hairy, and a great hunter. Jacob is preferred by his mother, and is shown soft, quiet, and a cook. The meaning attached to Esau is male; that to Jacob is female. As the later Jews were opposed to female deities they changed the word Jacob into Israel.

The name *Mary* (the name given to the mother of Jesus and to many other women in the Gospels) is curiously like Myrrha, the mother of Adonis. Lemprière says that at the birth of her son (the father was Cynyras, King of Cyprus, her own father) she fled into Arabia and was changed into a tree called myrrh. Mary is the Greek form of the Hebrew "Mir-yam," the name of the sister of Moses, who was, according to one legend, the mother of *Joshua*, which word means, like Jesus, the Saviour. The meaning behind Miriam is "bitter," but the word may also have come from *myrrh* or *mare*, the sea. Robert Taylor says it was one of the names of the Goddess Venus, called the *Marine Venus* by the Romans, and the Venus Anadyomene, the Venus rising out of the sea, by the Greeks.

Venus has been painted innumerable times rising out of the sea on a *shell*—the female symbol.

The shell, particularly the cowrie shell, was very early associated with sex and considered in a symbolical way to be what Professor W. J. Perry calls "a life-giver." Its shape was identified with that of the female sex organ, and even now, says Perry, "in the Sudan and elsewhere women wear girdles of cowrie shells to give them fertility." It is interesting also to note how these shells contributed to the adoption of gold as a means of monetary currency. As pointed out by Sir G. Elliot Smith :—

With the introduction of the practice of wearing shells on girdles and necklaces and as hair ornaments the time arrived . . . when [people] resorted to the manufacture of imitations of these shells in clay and stone. . . . They discovered that they could make more durable and attractive models of cowries and other shells by using the plastic yellow metal which was lying about in deserts unused and unappreciated. This practice first gave to the metal gold an arbitrary value which it did not possess before. For the peculiar life-giving attributes of the shells modelled in the yellow metal came to be transferred to the metal itself. (*The Evolution of the Dragon*, p. 221.)

And Perry adds that "Elliot Smith suggests that the great demand for cowrie shells for ornaments and amulets caused people to exchange all manner of articles for them, and thus to make them into a

currency. So gold, when it was associated with the cowrie, also became a currency." (*The Origin of Magic and Religion.*)

But, just as eventually the stars were deified and made to imitate human beings in their behaviour, so was the cowrie shell conceived as a "Great Mother"; and Perry shows how the men of the Upper Palaeolithic Age turned the shell into a woman "by adding arms, legs, a trunk, and a head, thus producing a grotesque feminine image, formed of the combination of a woman and a shell." There can indeed be little doubt that here we have the origin of the numerous goddesses—virgin or otherwise—who eventually gave rise to the myths of Venus, Cybele, Aphrodite, Astarte, and the others; and just as Hathor, the Golden Hathor, the Lady of Nubia, had as an emblem a necklace of golden cowrie shells, so similar symbols came to be associated with the "Great Mother." As one other example, says Perry, "Elliot Smith has suggested that the shape of the barley grain being similar to that of the cowrie shell, and therefore to the external organ of generation, has helped to cause barley to be regarded as a form of the Great Mother and to be possessed of life. Hence has arisen the idea of the Corn Mother which is so widespread throughout the world, as may be seen from a perusal of Sir James Frazer's *Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild*. The Japanese Shinto texts explicitly state this resemblance in the case of such cereals as rice, and such fruits as the apricots and peach."

Venus, Isis, and Ceres were all called "Our Lady" and "Queen of Heaven," and these are the appellations of the Virgin Mary to this day; and Roman Catholics are not one whit less ardent in their adoration of their goddess than were the worshippers of the pagan goddess in antiquity.

Maia, the mother of Chrishna, is supposed to be virgin, and the picture of Mary and the babe Jesus is exactly like that of Maia and Chrishna, or Isis and Horus. In fact, many ancient sculptures of Mary and Jesus are, like those of Isis and Horus, *black*. Inman claims that the vulva is black among almost all Oriental nations; while Brahma, according to Moor, was painted *red* (one of the meanings of the word Adam) because red was supposed to be the "colour peculiar to creative power"; it is, of course, the colour of blood.

One of the spies sent by Moses to Canaan is called Nahbi. Inman quotes the following from *Asiatic Researches*, Vol. 3, page 363, with regard to this word:—

The navel, *Nahbi* of Vishnu, by which the *os tincae* (the mouth of the womb) is meant, is worshipped as one and the same as the sacred yoni. This emblem, too, was Egyptian, and the mystery seems to have been solemnly typified, in the temple of Jupiter Ammon, by the vast *umbilicus*, made of stone, and carried by eighty men in a boat which represented the *fossa naviculus*. Such, I believe, was the

mystical boat of Isis, which, according to Lactantius, was adored in Egypt.

In Greek the word for navel is *omphalos*. Navel is a sort of euphemism for yoni—which perhaps helps to explain a little the story of Hercules and Omphale. The ancients dreaded nothing so much as the loss of virility, the result of excessive passion for women. It is difficult to understand how such a word as Nahbi was ever introduced into the Bible unless its phallic significance is admitted.

The *Encyclopædia Biblica* is quite emphatic about the names in the Bible being more or less artificial :—

We are met by two great difficulties, the fact that the Hebrew language is but imperfectly known, and, what is much more important, the fact that the traditional forms of the names are often untrustworthy. . . . It was impossible to ascertain from tradition the exact pronunciation of names no longer in use . . . the LXX version often exhibits a different pronunciation which, in some cases, is preferable to the Massoretic. Even the consonants are sometimes far less trustworthy than we might at first suppose . . . even when the form of a name is fairly certain its meaning is often unintelligible . . . a considerable number of the names in the Old Testament must be regarded as fictitious. Not to mention the names in the list of

mythical patriarchs down to Abraham, who are, perhaps, in some cases of non-Hebrew origin, we meet with various names which were invented in order to fill up the gaps in genealogies and the like.

The work of investigators like Inman and Hannay is thus justified, and there can be little doubt that it has cast a flood of light on the hidden meaning of many names and words in the Bible. Whether they have proved their case as to the phallic meanings they claim to see in the words must be, after all, a matter of opinion.

The Hebrew word *Tamar* means "palm-tree" (cp. our word timber), and a palm-tree was, like an upright stone, a pillar, a round tower, a may-pole, a spire, used as a symbol for the phallus. The Jews even to this day use the branch of a palm-tree and of a citron, which are held together, in special prayers during the Feast of Tabernacles—the feast of fruitfulness. Whatever meaning may now be attached to the use of these two objects, it is difficult to dissociate their primary significance from the ceremony when one realizes what the palm-tree originally stood for and considers the shape of the citron.

Enough has been said, it is hoped, to show that though the Jewish nation after the fall of Jerusalem, and perhaps for a century or so before, set their face dead against the "gods" of the races surrounding them, and particularly against the "abominations" of other religions, their own religion is

full of their early beliefs; these were, surely, in many ways phallic. Whether this can or should be brought up against them it is for the reader to decide; it depends on the way one looks at the worship of sex in religion. From one point of view, nothing can be more degraded; from another, nothing can be more sublime.

CHAPTER IV

SEX-WORSHIP IN THE ANCIENT EAST

WHETHER Lucian really wrote the treatise published in his name on phallic worship in Syria is not known for certain; but it has always been recognized as an authoritative work. It is true that Dulaure considers it almost impossible for a sceptic like Lucian to have shown the credulity of the writer of the treatise; but, be this as it may, the description given of the temple at Hierapolis in Syria is detailed and convincing:—

It is the largest [says Lucian] of all the temples in Syria. None other is so holy or has such religious devotion paid to it. It possesses the most precious and ancient works and a crowd of wonders, including statues of gods who manifest their presence, move themselves, and give forth oracles. Even when the temple is closed a voice can often be heard, as has been attested by many witnesses. Of all the temples I know this one is the wealthiest, while Arabia, Phœnicia, and Cappodicia continually pay it tribute. The Sicilians and Assyrians bring it their most treasured products, which I have seen for myself. Nowhere else, among any people, are celebrated so many feasts and solemnities.

I made inquiries as to how far back in antiquity goes the temple and was told many fables and barbarous traditions which I shall retail—though I admit the truth of none. Most of my informants were of opinion that it was Deucalion of Scythia who founded the temple; others that it was Semiramis, Queen of Babylon, who dedicated it, not to Juno, but to her mother Derceto. Still others that the temple, dedicated to Rhea, was the work of Atys. Rhea castrated Atys, who thereupon dressed himself in female clothes, travelled all over the earth, initiating orgies and singing hymns in her honour. When he came to Syria he founded the temple and its mysteries.

I preferred the opinion which made the temple the work of Bacchus and the goddess to whom it was dedicated, Juno, as it contains many proofs that Bacchus was its founder. One of them is that in the vestibule are two enormous phalli upon which is the inscription: “*Bacchus has raised these phalli in honour of Juno, his mother-in-law.*” There are also many small male figures endowed with enormous phalli and also one of brass sitting down, equally endowed.

The height of these two phalli was, according to Dulaure, about 170 feet, and they were so large that a man could live in the top—which was actually the custom. He remained there for

seven years making the populace believe that, as he was nearer to the gods than they, he could converse with them and bring to the people prosperity. Lucian thought that the whole performance was in honour of Bacchus. Dulaure considered that the shape of the two phalli influenced the building of towers of a similar shape, particularly those of Gothic cathedrals.

In Phœnicia the phallus was also adored, though always in conjunction with Adonis. Adonis was supposed to be another name for Osiris of Memphis, or Bacchus of Thebes in Egypt.

At Byblos the worship of Venus or Astarte was practised. The goddess is supposed to preside over the act of generation, and, as such, has always been the symbol of fecundity as well as of love in general. Herself in love with the beautiful Adonis (the sun), at spring-time she offers the earth, which, greedy for the sun's heat, receives its rays and is thereby impregnated. And, just as the death and resurrection of Osiris were celebrated in Egypt, so at Byblos the death of Adonis was a tremendous festival, celebrated with weeping and mourning. This was succeeded by the festival of his resurrection, when, amid great joy, an enormous phallus, the symbol of spring's returning, was carried in triumph in a long procession of devotees. The story of Adonis being wounded in his sexual parts by a boar and, on his recovery, consecrating the phallus, was invented by the priests to explain the ceremony. Here, as in most if not all religions, one sees the myth invented to

explain the rite, the rite being almost invariably older.

The same fable and ceremonies are also found in Phrygia, though here the god is called Atys (or Attis). It should be noted that, wherever the cult is phallic the resurrection of the member and the joyous ceremonies, follow some dreadful event which destroyed it. During winter Nature is dead, little is produced, and only when the sun appears at spring-time do the flowers begin to grow, the trees to bud, and "a young man's fancy turns to love." Spring-time is the happy time, and it has ever been celebrated as such by Northern races. The fertility motive has been symbolized in many ways. Here in England, for example, both Jews and Gentiles insist upon Easter eggs—the egg being the fertility symbol *par excellence*.

In Assyria and Persia, says Ptolemy the geographer, "the generative organs of both sexes are held sacred. They are the symbols of the sun, Saturn, and Venus, the planets which preside at fecundity."

Mithra was the sun-god of the ancient Persians, and among the bas-reliefs found representing him is one showing a man holding his phallus ready for the sexual act. There are also many showing the god slaughtering a bull or, in some cases, a goat—the triumph of the sun over the celestial Bull or Goat (Ram); proving how widely known in the ancient world were the signs of the Zodiac and the sun-myth. As has already been pointed out, it is difficult to separate the sun-myth from

phallic worship, the two are so closely inter-related. The festivals are almost always in honour of the sun as a fertilizing agent; when they are joyous events, it is because he has triumphed over the powers of darkness (night or winter) which sought to deprive him of his virility. This is the symbolic explanation of the various feasts in honour of the sun's resurrection at spring-time, no matter under what name or under whose auspices. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is no exception to the general rule.

CHAPTER V

THE CULT OF VENUS

MODERN views on the population question find expression in the growing practice of birth control. Among the ancients, however, large families were as enthusiastically honoured as large flocks of animals. They represented a source of wealth to the individual and to the community. To be sterile was regarded as a sort of divine malediction, and this applied as much to an impotent man as to a woman incapable of having children. As Dulaure puts it, continence, far from being elevated to the rank of a virtue, was looked upon as a menace to society. The authorities aimed at an ever-increasing population and, as a result of their active interest in human fertility, paid great honour to the organs of generation.

There can be no doubt that the open worship of the lingam and the yoni, together with the almost complete disregard of clothing and the consequent exposure of the sexual organs, profoundly influenced the social life of primitive communities. Later, obscene statues and indecent paintings and frescoes went hand in hand with this worship of sex; and, whatever purity of motive may have inspired the early devotees,

the religion of phallicism became in time utterly degraded. The most notable instance of this was in the adoration paid to Venus.

The cult of Venus was scattered all over the East and was introduced very early into Greece and Italy. The homage paid to her had for its object the honouring of the fruitfulness of Nature at large; and, though this was supposed to be the characteristic of the worship of Priapus, there were some important points of difference. That she was a more popular divinity or, at all events, became more popular in the long run, is clear from the fact that at least 185 temples are known to have been erected in her honour, some of the finest statues that have ever been sculptured are named after her, and she was the subject of many of the greatest pictures ever painted in antiquity.

In the celebrated mysteries through which initiates had to go to become devotees of Venus, they were not required to present offerings of flowers, fruits, animals, etc., as in most other religions, but were themselves given salt and a phallus as representing the act of generation. In return they were obliged to give money as to a courtesan. Where this happened Venus was veritably the goddess of prostitution, and was called Venus Pandemos or Popular; and it was in her honour that Solon had built a temple from the taxes imposed on a certain class of prostitute officially recognized by the Government of Athens. In the festivals organized in her honour these prostitutes

were obliged to give their profits entirely to the temple—that is, of course, to the State.

The homage rendered to Venus [says Montesquieu] was rather a profanation than a religion. She had temples where the women of the town prostituted themselves in her honour, from which they often saved for themselves a dowry. In other temples married women were obliged to go once in their lives, give themselves to whoever chose them, and throw into the sanctuary any money they received. In others prostitutes from all countries were honoured even more than married women. While, finally, there were some where men made eunuchs of themselves, dressed as women, and consecrated themselves entirely to her service.

At Samos a temple was erected in honour of the goddess of prostitution by the *Hetaïres*—the name given to a famous class of courtesans who filled a very prominent part in Greek society before our era. They were supposed to be the most intellectual types of women in the country; and, indeed, many of them have left names famous in history.

The prostitutes of Greece were divided into three classes—called Dicteriades, Auletrides, and Hetaïres. It was Solon who filled the established houses of prostitution with female slaves, who were bound by law, as Sanger points out, “to satisfy the demands of all who visited them and whose

wretched gains were a legitimate source of revenue to the State." These slaves were the unfortunate Dictyriades. They had to keep themselves rigorously apart from the more reputable Athenian women, were obliged to wear a particular costume, and forfeited all rights of citizenship. Many of the laws against them, however, were often relaxed in their favour; but in spite of this they led, as a rule, extremely miserable lives.

The Auletrides were the flute-players who provided the music at Greek banquets. Men rarely played the flute in Greece, in spite of the fact that it was supposed to be invented by Pan and developed by Midas. The Greeks undoubtedly loved music, and the flute became an essential part of many of the religious rituals—Ceres, for example, was "invariably worshipped to the sound of the flute." Many of the women could sing as well as play, and they soon became in great demand for banquets and concerts, and were often extremely well paid. Some also danced as they played, and Sanger considers these dances "were in the highest degree immoral and lascivious."

It was, however, the Hetairai who were the most popular prostitutes, and, for that matter, the most popular women in ancient Greece. They were allowed to go anywhere—unlike the "decent" women, married or unmarried. The Hetairai were the only members of their sex permitted to see such plays as those of Aristophanes, visit the studios of artists like Apelles and

Phidias, and listen to such discussions as those of Socrates. They could go through the streets with uncovered faces, wear fine clothing, and gather around them of an evening a literary and artistic circle chosen from the greatest men of Athens. To be virtuous in this great city of antiquity seems to have meant to be extremely dull—as, indeed, most of the “virtuous” married women probably were; they did not have the advantage of being able to cultivate their minds, like the Hetaïres.

“To judge of the position into which this social system thrust the female sex,” says Sanger, “one must glance at the mythology, or, to speak more correctly, at the religious faith of the Greek people. It has been conjectured that they derived their idea of Venus from the East. However this may be, Venus was certainly one of the earliest goddesses to whom their homage was paid.” And Sanger goes on to enumerate the number of various kinds of Venuses in ancient Greece.

In addition to Venus Pandemos, who at one time was the most popular, there were erected temples to Venus the Courtesan and to Venus Macheia—that is, the Venus of houses of ill-fame. Then there were Venus Castnia, the goddess of indecency; Venus Scotia, the patroness of darkness; and Venus Derceto, of street-walkers. Venus Divaricatrix—who seems to have been one of the most obscene of them all—and Venus Callipyge were further variations or developments of the original theme. They all had their

particular worshippers and temples and no doubt exclusive services, much as in the case of the various Christian sects of the present day. But the rites were certainly connected with the worship of sex in some form.

Whether the worship of Venus was prior to that of Isis is not known, though many of the traits of Isis can be found in Venus. For instance, under the name of Melanis, Venus was known as the Black (like Isis), symbolizing the fact that night was favourable to love. The temples raised in her honour were surrounded by thick groves in which one groped about in search of amorous adventure.

Without exhausting the list of Venuses, we might add the one known as Venus Mechanitis—the mechanical one. She was generally carved out of wood, with feet, hands, and face of marble. Hidden springs endowed her with life-like movements, and enabled the statue to take many indecent poses.

However varied the cult of Venus may have been in the rites addressed to the many goddesses of the same name, in one thing they were all alike—in their worship of a particular kind of beauty in woman. The Greeks flattered themselves as the greatest connoisseurs in the world when it came to what the French call “*la beauté de fesses*.” And Venus Callipyge—that is, “Venus aux belles fesses”—is the name given to one of the most beautiful statues of the goddess which have survived to this day.

There can be no doubt that the Greek State authorized a certain number of prostitutes to serve in the temples erected to Venus and devote themselves entirely to her worship. They were not only supposed to look after the male priests, but served also as under-priestesses, ready, through their own persons, to augment the revenue of the temples. Strabo declares there were over a thousand prostitutes actually living in the temple of Venus at Corinth; and it seems to have been a general usage to devote a certain number of young girls to the cult. As an example Xenophon of Corinth, who took part in the Olympian games, declared that he would give fifty Hetaires if he gained the victory. As he won he fulfilled his promise, and the poet Pindar composed one of his celebrated poems in honour of both the victory and the offering.

Corinth, indeed, was renowned for this kind of service to Venus, as the town itself never failed to approach the goddess in this way whenever it wanted any particular favour; and if the occasion was a very important one a procession was organized, composed entirely of courtesans, dressed—if dressed at all—in the costume of their profession.

As for the citizens of Athens, they thought so highly of these women that they called two statues of the goddess Venus Lena and Venus Lamia, in honour of the two mistresses of Demetrius Poliorcetes.

During the course of years the story of Osiris,

Isis, and Horus, together with the various myths invented by the Egyptian priests to account for the phallic worship in their country, filtered to Greece, where they were transformed in many ways into the fables of gods and goddesses so well known in mythology. As one instance, their story of the god Priapus is full of interest, since it shows how the Greeks worked on the phallic idea imported from Egypt.

They said that the enormous phallus with which Priapus is almost always gifted in statues and paintings—which, it might be added, are as a rule not shown to the general public—was the result of the jealousy of Juno, who was very angry when she found that Venus was going to have a child by Bacchus. Priapus was born in Lampsacus, and as the god grew up the women who heard of his “endowment” disputed among each other as to who should have him. Their husbands were angry and humiliated, and they condemned the god to exile. This made the women in turn very angry, and they implored the gods for vengeance, which resulted in the men getting some sexual disease. Priapus was appealed to, and he consented to cure them if he were allowed to return—which was done. From this sprang the cult of Priapus in Lampsacus, though it is really much older. The story was invented to explain the myth in Greece and, of course, took a different form from the explanation offered to the people in Egypt.

Priapus shared with Venus an incessant homage.

He was crowned with roses in spring, with thorns in summer, with grapes or vine-branches in autumn, and with olives in winter. Sometimes it was on the phallus that he was so crowned. The ceremony was carried out both in public and in private, and his image was engraved on vases, or on ivory, or on cups of gold. All these were then considered sacred and were carefully preserved by the women.

Sometimes in the processions devoted to Bacchus an enormous phallus was carried, surrounded by all sorts of satyrs, all displaying the same artifice in competition with the grotesque image. These were followed by women and finally by a statue of Bacchus, who, not to be outdone by Priapus, carried a triple phallus. Hymns were, of course, sung in his honour; an example will be found in the *Acharnians* of Aristophanes. The phallus also figured in the festivals called *Targilies*, which took place on May 6. They were held in honour of the sun-god Apollo and of Diana, the moon-goddess; and young people in the processions held up branches from which hung bread, fruit, figs, and phalli.

Dulaure insists that at first the phallus was always recognized as part of the sun-myth of which it was a symbol—a secondary addition to the ceremonies, but not the actual divinity. It was not till the inhabitants of Lampsacus decided to separate the phallus from sun-worship that it became a cult on its own, and it then became associated with Priapus.

The statues known as Hermes or Mercury, often endowed with an enormous phallus, could be found all over Greece adorning not only gardens but also the fields and highways. In fact, the ancients seem to have placed a conspicuous phallus indiscriminately on Pan, Hermes, Mercury, Priapus, and Bacchus, and invented a suitable fable to account for it. They even called one town Priapis, which was, according to one of the stories, the town to which the god was chased by the angry husbands of Lampsacus. In it was a temple built to the god Apollo; yet he was worshipped there under the name of Priapesæus—thus once again proving the connection between the sun and its power of fertility.

Pliny mentions many towns named Priapus where doubtless the god was venerated; as he was, indeed, in many parts of Greece. Both Pausanias and Plutarch give particulars of his worship and insist on the fact that his special characteristic was his enormous phallus. And it may be added that, as his worship was almost always associated with that of the sun, they called him “the Saviour of the World”—a title often given to sun-gods.

The ass was frequently sacrificed in his honour. One reason given for selecting this animal was a fable in which, so far as sex was concerned, the god was even better endowed than was the ass. His adorers also made offerings of flowers, fruit, milk, and honey—milk and wine being used to pour over the sex-organ, which, in addition, was kissed by the pious worshippers.

As Christianity was introduced into Greece and secured a foothold, the worship of Priapus began to decline. Many centuries passed before it was finally conquered by the later cult. The Fathers of the Church never ceased declaiming against its "indecenties" and "obscene" ceremonies; though perhaps this was not their principal reason for attack. They were violently opposed to *all* rival religions. The worshippers of Priapus did not give up their divinity without a struggle; they tried to modify some of their practices, insisting at the same time that, after all, the phallus was an emblem of the sun, the great giver of fertility in Nature. One of their apologists, Jamblicus, a Platonic philosopher living in the reign of Constantine, insisted that Priapus was merely the symbol of the generative force and that it provoked nothing but generation. "It is only," he added, "because there are so many consecrated phalli that the gods have bestowed fruitfulness upon the earth."

But, though Christianity never ceased its attacks, the people were loth to give up their god. Phallic emblems were carried by women round their necks and even on their bodies. "I am ashamed," said Arnobius at the beginning of the third century, "to speak of the mysteries where the phallus is consecrated, and to admit that there is not a canton in Greece where it cannot be found." Lactantius did his utmost to pour ridicule on the fable of Priapus, but, in spite of the fulminations of the Fathers, the historian Evagrius, writing

towards the end of the sixth century, was obliged to admit that the cult still existed in his day. Even later historians confessed that ridicule of the enormous size of the sex-organ attached to the statues of Priapus and kindred gods had not resulted in the disappearance of the cult; and Dulaure adds that, though the Greeks eventually became Christians, they still had many superstitious beliefs—remnants of phallicism almost impossible to eradicate altogether, so strongly implanted was the original religion. Even Dufour in his monumental *History of Prostitution* is compelled to admit this. He tries to show that Christianity did its best to inculcate chastity and continence in its adherents, but he says :—

So strongly was prostitution intermingled with religion, so much hidden pleasure did it bring to priests at the altar, that it managed to survive, not only in many convents, but was deliberately entangled with the indecent cult of certain saints. It was always Priapus that the ignorant worshipped under the name of St. Guignolet or St. Grelichon; and it was always prostitution that, at the beginning of Christianity, put sterile women in direct communication with these saintly statues.

It was not only in Greece, however, that the worship of Venus was so prominent. Just as Priapus was worshipped under other names, so was Venus. She was Mylitta, and Astoreth, and Astarte, and Aphrodite, and even Semiramis.

Herodotus has left an account of the way the Babylonian females were obliged to prostitute themselves once a year to Mylitta. The women, once inside the temple, were not allowed to leave it until they had paid the debt—which in the case of young and pretty girls did not take very long; in the case of the older and plainer ones it sometimes took years. In the Epistle of Jeremy in *Baruch*, chap. vi., will be found more allusions to the customs of these women. Strabo, three and a half centuries after Herodotus, reports almost the same facts. And at the time of Alexander the Great morals seem to have been even worse. Contemporary historians claim that never were a people more corrupted than the Babylonians. At their banquets the women threw off all restraints of modesty. Even the upper class were no better than the lowest of prostitutes.

In Armenia, Venus was adored under the name of Anaitis in a special temple built like the one dedicated to Mylitta in Babylon. In the confines of the temple were numbers of people consecrated entirely to her worship. Only foreigners were permitted to enter the sacred precincts in search of amorous adventure. The girls who thus sacrificed themselves on the altars of the goddess were not considered unworthy of a husband—what they had done was entirely in the name of religion; in fact, it was precisely those who had had the greatest number of foreigners who were regarded as most worthy of the marriage state.

For the Phœnicians Venus became Astarte,

and she had temples at Tyre, Sidon, Heliopolis, and other towns. She was rather different from Venus proper because she was given both sexes at the same time—that of Adonis as well as her own. This enabled women to dress as men and men to dress as women in the festivals devoted to her worship. It may not be without interest to point out here that this custom persists to this day. In the Festival of Purim among the Jews, which they celebrate in honour of Esther, men and women often used to dress themselves in each others' clothes, and in some countries still do so. And on the day called *Mardi Gras* (our “pancake” Tuesday), which is held at about “Purim” time, the present writer, as late as 1910, also saw the same custom in Paris among Catholics. Esther is probably a corruption of Astarte, and the interesting fiction in the Bible may perhaps be considered inspired by the devotion paid to the Phœnician goddess.

The Phœnicians were, as is well known, great travellers, and they built, among others, many temples to Astarte in the island of Cyprus. Though at first the women indignantly refused to prostitute themselves in her worship, they were eventually converted, and used to walk along the shores of the island ready to sell themselves to any strangers arriving. This custom was observed as late as the second century.

The hermaphrodite Venus had a beard and all the male attributes under the feminine dress, and the devotion paid to her included the most secret

mysteries. These took place in the woods surrounding her temple of Amathontes, and one of the birds in this wood—the wagtail—was dedicated to her. It should be pointed out, however, that Venus with a beard represented, according to Payne Knight, “the celestial as distinguished from the popular goddess of that name; the one being a personification of a general procreative power, and the other only of animal desire or concupiscence.” Be that as it may, the fact remains that practically all Asia Minor adopted the cult of Venus, which deified the sensual appetites, though it often added to it the worship of Adonis. Adonis is perhaps the same as *Adonai* (the name give by the Jews to Jehovah) and personifies the male, without which the female remains unfruitful. The ancients symbolized almost everything in Nature; the funeral festivals held in honour of Adonis, who was killed by a boar and wept for so passionately by Venus, were really meant to show that the exhaustion of our physical forces produced by abuse can be repaired only by a period of absolute repose. The festivals of Adonis were very popular and used to attract an immense cosmopolitan crowd. The women were required to sacrifice both their hair and their virtue, and there was much wailing and beating with rods. This was followed by tremendous joy, which announced the resurrection of Adonis—that is, of course, the resurrection of desire. Under the portico of the temple the priests then exposed a Priapic statue of the god, and the usual

scenes of prostitution followed. It need hardly be added that everything had to be paid for, the priests of Venus, like those of all other religions, rarely working for mere "love."

Whatever the name given to the goddess, and wherever she was worshipped, sacred prostitution seems to have been the principal ceremony. Nothing was modified except those things which naturally would be different among various peoples. Strabo gives long accounts of some of the temples, like those at Zela and at Comanes, which, he says, were prodigiously enriched by the money earned by the sacred prostitutes. "During the festivals," says Dufour, "the borders of the temple resembled a vast camp peopled by men of all nations, offering a bizarre intermingling of languages and costumes. It was the same at Suse, at Ecbatania in Media, and among the Parthians, who were, as far as sensuality goes, the pupils and followers of the Persians." Even the Amazons were willing to lose some of their boasted chastity by the introduction of the cult of Venus—whom they called, all the same, "the Chaste Artemis."

The Lydians, among whom the worship reached its highest pinnacle of devotion, introduced Venus to the Persians after being conquered by them. In the Lydian armies were a crowd of dancers and musicians highly skilled in the voluptuous arts. Music became a sort of spur to the orgies which followed the great banquets indulged in by the rich and powerful, who spared neither sex nor age

in disgraceful spectacles. Most of these scenes, described by writers like Macrobius, are better left to the imagination. It is sufficient to say here that there is some justification for the reputation Venus is celebrated for during the ages. Or, to put it another way, in the words of the poet Phileterus: "It is not without reason that all over Greece one sees Temples raised to Venus-Courtesan and not to Venus-Married."

CHAPTER VI

SEX AND RELIGION IN ANCIENT ROME

It is astonishing to find that the Romans, who were, without doubt, one of the greatest races the world has known, should have shown the utmost credulity and superstition. This turbulent and conquering people, who produced such figures as Julius Cæsar, Cicero, Lucretius, Cato, Seneca, and a host of others, could be made to tremble before some paltry "oracle" or before some absurd ceremony during which a ridiculous formality may have been forgotten, or even before some sacrificial bird which may or may not have eaten some special food. It is not altogether surprising, therefore, to find that they swallowed the absurdities of most of the pagan religions which surrounded them, or which they found among the peoples they conquered, and to which they even added their own absurdities. The Romans seem to have had a god for almost everything—in fact, it is said that in Rome itself there were more gods than inhabitants.

When exactly the cults of Venus and Priapus were introduced into Italy is not known; Dulaure says that they were certainly unknown at the time of their earliest kings. But once they were introduced the cults spread rapidly through the

country. Bacchus (like Priapus) was named *Liber* or *Pater Liber*, while Venus was called *Libera*.

Clement of Alexandria considered that the priests of the goddess Cybele (who were called *Corybantes* and also *Cabires*) first introduced Priapus into Italy. These priests were members of the cult of the gods called Cabires, of the island of Samothracia, where the phallus was held in the highest veneration, as reported by Herodotus. Clement said that they stole the holy basket or ark in which reposed the sacred phallus, took it to Etruria, and preached the gospel of the phallus to the inhabitants. From Etruria the worship as well as the rites and ceremonies soon reached Rome.

St. Augustine in his *City of God* mentions the cult. "The sexual organs of man," he says, "are consecrated in the temple of Liber; those of woman in the sanctuaries of Libera, who is really Venus. These two divinities are called *father* and *mother* because they preside at the act of generation."

Two festivals were held in honour of the god Bacchus (or Liber) somewhere about the same time as the Greeks held theirs in honour of Dionysus, and the Egyptians in honour of Osiris—that is, in the middle of March.

The Romans called the phallus Mutinus, and this symbol roused the ire of Augustine. He objected to the open way in which Mutinus was worshipped in the festivals devoted to him—as if the real reason was to glorify debauchery. The symbol was placed in a small chariot and driven through the towns and villages, the people ac-

companying it with lascivious songs and dances. Even the most respectable women with families used to crown the figure with flowers.

The festivals of Venus took place some days afterwards; and here again the symbol of Mutinus was carried in great honour. Roman ladies carried it to the temple of Venus Erycinus, and there they placed the sacred object on the breast of Venus. After this Mutinus was taken back to his temple.

The Bacchanalian festivals took place towards the end of October; they were an almost exact replica of those held by the Greeks in honour of Dionysus. They were generally celebrated in the sacred wood called *Similia*, near the river Tiber, and at first only women were admitted. Respectable married women used to take turns in being priestesses, and no scandal attacked the cult till a woman named Pacculla Minia brought in her two sons. Thenceforth other men were introduced and the "mysteries" took place every month and lasted five days. The men had to be under twenty years of age—older men not being quite so pliable, impressionable, or active.

These Bacchanalian feasts soon became noted for the most shameful indecencies, almost impossible to describe. Scenes of all kinds were enacted which would require the pen of a Marquis de Sade to depict in all their bestiality. Crowds of people sought to be initiated into the cult, and Dulaure remarks that it was not merely a few but an entire people who wished to participate in the

abominable orgies. Indeed, the orgies became so bad that the Senate of Rome had to forbid them under the severest penalties (in the year of Rome, 564), though they did not forbid the worship of the good Venus. Juvenal (A.D. 60–140) in one of his most famous satires (which is famous mostly to those who know Latin, as it is not easy to obtain an unexpurgated translation), pours the whole of his scorn on the scenes that were enacted at the secret mysteries, and on the debaucheries and the indecencies which accompanied them. He may have exaggerated somewhat, but he is supported by other writers; and there is no doubt that nothing in Greece or Persia could surpass the sexual licence displayed in Rome.

The Romans took the cult with them to Gaul. They called a seaport *Portus Veneris*, which the Gauls transformed to *Port de Vendres*—Vendres being the name given by them to the goddess of love. Other towns in France still bear traces of the name, such as *Ventre*, *Vendœvre*, etc., and the day devoted to the cult is still called *Vendre-di*—our Friday.

There exists a legend in verse narrating the exploits of Saint Romain, who was Bishop of Rouen in the seventh century. In his day the cult of Venus was still honoured in an old castle near the walls of the town. In its centre was erected a temple to Venus, and her devotees used to gather round to take part in almost the same kind of disgraceful scenes which disfigured the Bacchanalian rites in old Rome. Needless to say

it was the saint who caused the scandalous orgies to cease; for he destroyed the temple, smashed the idol, and put to flight its priests and votaries.

It is perhaps not entirely fair to the peoples of antiquity to judge them by the standards of our own morals, usages, and state of civilization. It is quite possible that they looked upon the act of generation in a way we do not; for them it may have had a distinctly religious significance under certain conditions. At all events, the continual exposure of representations of the sexual organs does not seem to have caused the public scandal it would do in our days. As Volney says:—

We should not be fair to the peoples of antiquity if we constantly compared our own civilization with theirs. It would be ridiculous to expect that they ought to have conformed to our morals and manners. We are too fond of reasoning about them in conformity with our own ideas and not enough after their own.

Moreover, it has often been remarked that, even at this day, in certain countries women think it more shameful to expose their faces than their sex to strangers.

The women and girls of Sparta were, under the laws of Lycurgus, allowed publicly to wrestle, or take part in various sports with the men, mostly entirely nude. Every effort was made to instil in the minds of the citizens that there was nothing shameful in the practice—though it must be

confessed that Aristotle declared positively that the Spartan women "openly committed the grossest acts of debauchery." It is possible that the laws of Lycurgus had one object—that of increasing the population of Sparta; and he certainly succeeded in improving the race, making it hardy, strong, and vigorous. Plato agreed with Lycurgus; in his *Laws* he recommends that young people should mix freely in the nude state so as to know each other better.

The pictures given by Roman poets and historians of the sex-life in ancient Rome seem appallingly hideous to modern eyes. Indeed, it is quite impossible to translate some of their works without "euphemisms." Nowhere could the worship of Priapus have produced more immorality; nowhere could sexual licence in its most depraved forms have been more universal. In almost every street of the great city temples were raised in honour of Venus. Fields and gardens and squares contained statues of Priapus, almost always endowed with an enormous phallus. Every year at the Lupercalia naked young men would run through the streets striking women with thongs—the women believing, in many instances, that this would make them more prolific. The walls of many houses were painted with frescoes depicting scenes of infamous depravity. In the public baths many of these scenes were actually enacted; men and women and young girls mixed together in a state of nudity and almost every form of intercourse was openly allowed. A sitting figure

of Mutinus had to be used by brides before marriage; and other usages, impossible to describe, followed the wedding. Whether the Romans actually believed in the divinity of their gods, or whether they used them as a cloak for covering their shameful vices, is a problem almost impossible to solve at this distance of time. Some of the great Romans were naturally sceptical; but the mass of the people was well content to follow the religious rites as a pretext for their debauchery.

Of course, *everything* was not always sex *degradation* of some kind. There were public festivals which may have been in a sense voluptuous without being actually obscene; and some of these were dedicated to Venus. One such ceremony was the crowning of the goddess with myrtle—she was then called Venus Murtia. Offerings of little wax dolls were made, possibly as a substitute for the more ancient one of virgins sacrificing their virginity. Often plays were performed representing incidents in the life of Venus, such as the Judgment of Paris, the Loves of Adonis, and other mythological scenes—though it must be added that where the play required that the actors appear nude they did so, and this led on to more licentious spectacles and to lascivious dances.

It is curious to remark that the Roman matrons, who rather prided themselves on their chastity and morals as a contrast to those of the women of the town, considered it no shame to sacrifice to Cupid, or Mutinus, or Pertunda, or to the other

divinities in whom sex was the chief attribute. Priapus in particular was honoured by their devotion, and he presided at their love feasts as well as at those of marriage. He was crowned with flowers or wreaths; he was given nuts as an allusion in some way to the mysteries of marriage, and apples as a sort of memory of the Judgment of Paris. Incense was burned before him, and people danced around his statues to the sound of the lute and the lyre. His phallus was alluded to without shame and was copied in a hundred ways in the private lives of the citizens—or rather, we should say, was used in some way in all sorts of figures, lamps, door-knockers, and household knick-knacks. Many of these recovered from the ruins of Pompeii and Herculaneum survive in the *secret* Museum at Naples. And, needless to say, the image was used as an amulet by women of all classes.

Priapus was worshipped under the name of Mutunus or Mutinus, or even Tutunus; and the devotion paid to the god under one or other of these names was exceedingly difficult to eradicate. Both Lactantius and Augustine attacked the indecent rites associated with the worship, especially because the women insisted that the god presided over their fecundity. Moreover, Mutinus was given a wife—Mutuna or Tutuna, who was just as shameful as the male god. (She must not be confounded with Pertunda, who was a sort of hermaphrodite goddess supposed to preside over the wedding-night.) She was undoubtedly a

survival of sacred prostitution, as were also two other deities—Subigus and Prema—whose duty it was to instruct the bride and bridegroom in the mysteries of love. There were also two little gods called Tychon and Orthanes; they were merely humble followers of the great Priapus, their function being to provoke lascivious thoughts.

All this worship was nothing but a survival of sacred prostitution, which infected the social life of the Romans as it did that of the Greeks. Its object was as much to make money for the priests as to pander to the depraved tastes of the people. And it must not be imagined that the authorities were not quite alive to this fact. Dufour says that the temple of Venus in Rome was destroyed at least ten times by them and ten times rebuilt—though it should be added that the temples often went under the name of Isis also. It was this goddess, introduced no one knows when into the Roman Empire, who had a large temple devoted to her worship in the Champ-de-Mars and surrounded by large gardens. Its priests seem to have been capable of almost any crime—at least in the realm of vice. They are pictured as being often drunk and bloated; yet they promenaded the streets of Rome in their dirty linen robes with a dog's-head mask on their faces, demanding charity and threatening the vengeance of Isis on those who refused. They are said also to have acted as "pimps," ready to undertake any amorous charge, whether of seduction or, as it is now called, of white-slave

traffic. In his famous *Satires* the poet Juvenal scathingly attacks both the priests and the adulterous scenes which took place regularly in the temple of Isis.

With the worship of Isis in Rome went the worship of Bacchus, who was considered one of the divine incarnations of Osiris. The festivals which go under the name of mysteries presented the usual scenes of debauchery. The men called themselves *Bacchants*, the women *Bacchantes*. Often, disguised as fauns, they would all run through the streets naked or half naked, with cymbals and tambours and other musical instruments, mounted on donkeys or asses, and drinking out of glasses formed in the shape of a phallus, the women dancing round a car containing male and female symbols of an enormous size. In the temple itself, as Bacchus was considered an hermaphrodite deity, the men used to dress as women and the women as men, to the accompaniment of the usual orgies.

In Rome, unlike Greece, the temple prostitutes were allowed to visit any of the sacred edifices to pursue their profession, and they faithfully deposited part of their gains on the altars. Sacred prostitution was tolerated partly because it was a source of revenue and partly because Rome was tolerant, to a surprising degree, of all cults—so long, at least, as they were not inimical to the reigning Government.

It is strange to notice that side by side with the almost utter disregard of feminine chastity

caused by this open prostitution was the institution of the Vestal Virgins. These were the priestesses of the temple of Vesta, six in number, who had to enter the service at about ten years of age; they were vowed to chastity for thirty years, after which they were allowed to return to civil life. If they broke their vow they were buried alive.

Vesta was the daughter of Rhea and Saturn, sister to Ceres and Juno. She is sometimes confounded with her mother, but there were actually two Vestas, one the wife and the other the daughter of Saturn. The earth-goddess is the wife, while her daughter is the goddess of fire as well as of the home and of altars. It was Æneas who first introduced her to the Romans, and it was Numa who built her temple, into which no males were permitted to enter. In it was the sacred fire which the Vestal Virgins had to keep continually alight; if it was ever extinguished some sudden calamity was supposed to threaten the country. The order lasted almost a thousand years, and very few of the virgins were caught breaking their vows of chastity. It was about A.D. 39 that the Vestal Virgins were abolished and the fire of Vesta put out. There can be little doubt that the Christian orders of nuns, with their vows of celibacy and service, are merely a sort of continuation of these Pagan Vestal Virgins. A cynic might add, however, that there the resemblance ends; for, while the Roman Virgins seem to have led a particularly pure life in an age when shameful debauchery was practised almost universally,

the accounts given by contemporary writers of nunneries and convents during the Middle Ages at least do not credit the nuns and abbesses with an exceptional devotion to their vows of virginity.

Dufour calls attention to the horror that adultery seems to have excited among the primitive peoples of Italy in spite of the depraved morals imported from Phœnicia and Greece. For example, at Cumæ in Campania, Italy, when a woman was taken in adultery she was exposed, completely nude, on the forum, and there for several hours received the injuries and filth thrown at her by the crowd. She was then put on the back of an ass and driven through the town amid the jokes and jeers of the people. Though not punished further, she was thenceforth known as the woman who had ridden the ass, and this epithet pursued her for the rest of her life, which was thus made abject and miserable. According to certain commentators, however, these scenes were a survival of others even worse, in which the ass figured much as the goat of Mendes figured in ancient Egypt. One of the old Greek romances (a forerunner of the famous *Golden Ass* of Apuleius), written by Lucius of Petræ, has a scene in which the ass figures prominently in a way which did not seem to excite any remarkable aversion in those days but which would now be condemned in the severest terms—to put the matter mildly. The ass is represented in many mythological scenes—as, for example, in the story of Cybele and Priapus; the animal figured also in the festivals of Bacchus,

which gave rise to a celebrated epigram : “ Priapus hated the ass only because he was jealous of it.”

It may not be without interest nowadays to point out that one of the supposed laws of Romulus, the founder of Rome, was to the effect that a patrician was not allowed to marry a plebeian—an interesting anticipation of the “ pure-race ” theory of modern Germany. The plebeians, who had been raised to the full rank of citizens, were deeply hurt, and they loudly protested. In any case, marriage was for long made a rather complicated matter for them—though, as far as it went, it placed a woman on an almost equal footing with her husband where “ rights ” were concerned. There seem to have been three forms of marriage, all hedged round by ceremonies—though the third was more a kind of legalized concubinage than a marriage proper. With this, and prostitution generally, however, we can deal only when they come directly in contact with phallicism ; but it is remarkable that the Romans, a great and noble race in so many aspects, should have been so complacent towards not only every kind of prostitution, but to almost all forms of sexual aberration and vice, even those considered as “ against ” nature.

One class of Roman prostitute is worth noting. Those who belonged to it were nicknamed *alicarioe* or *bakers*. They would stand outside bakers’ shops, particularly those who sold certain kinds of cakes bought as offerings to Venus, Isis, Priapus, and other gods and goddesses. These cakes were generally shaped like the male and female sex

organs, and they had an enormous sale. In addition, the bakers were always ready to oblige customers by keeping a staff of prostitutes on the premises all day and night.

Another extraordinary fact comes into prominence directly one studies the manners and morals of ancient Rome. It is that, while many of its authors led a life of austerity and comparative chastity, the books they wrote seem to have been packed with licentious descriptions and allusions, often couched in the most obscene language. Pornographic works were in constant demand, though the names of few of their writers have come down to us. The famous novel of Petronius, the *Satyricon*, has survived; the poetry of Juvenal and the epigrams of Martial and Catullus prove how popular was this kind of literature in ancient Rome. It is, indeed, something to be thankful for that any of the ancient classics have survived, since it is mainly to them that we owe our knowledge of the modes, manners, and morals of so many peoples of antiquity.

As Dufour points out, Christianity pursued these classics remorselessly, destroying everything it could, particularly any work which savoured of eroticism. Love was a sin in the eyes of the Church Fathers; woman was all evil, the temptress, the seductress who made men turn from the righteous path of the Lord to deadly sin. Their works are full of nonsense about women which no one can read now without a smile and—pity. But this does not excuse the deliberate

destruction of so many valuable works which were popular in ancient Rome. For example, we have nothing of Proculus; nothing of the famous orators Hortensius and Servius Sulpitius, who are known to have written beautiful if licentious verse; nothing of Sisenna, or Memonius, or Ticide, or Sabellus, or Cornificius, or Eubius, or Anser, or Porcius—all of whom established great reputations not only with poets like Ovid but also with that portion of the public which could read and enjoy good literature. Their books were, according to Dufour, systematically destroyed by the early Fathers—though it should be added that some of the Fathers or their followers seem also to have destroyed precious copies of the Canonical Gospels by effacing the writing and putting in its place some of their own effusions.

Of course, the question as to whether the destruction of erotic verse and other writings generally can be justified in the interest of morals is another matter altogether. It brings up the whole subject of censorship—what ought to be censored, and who should be the censors. One conclusion bound to emerge from any discussion of this problem is that the last persons who should have any hand in censorship are people with the kind of unhealthy mind displayed by the Christian Church Fathers. They were ready to destroy art in every shape and form—poetry, music, painting, and sculpture—that did not conform in some way to their own narrow and ignorant ideals of religion. It was not their fault that the

works of the great Latin and Greek authors which have reached us were not also destroyed. It is not to them that we owe Herodotus, Livy, Tacitus, Horace, Catullus, Martial, and Petronius.

It must not be supposed that the various temples in Rome were used merely for licentious purposes. Whatever the priests may have thought about Venus, Priapus, Hercules, Isis, or even a god like Æsculapius, it is a fact that the general public paid their devotions to their particular divinities quite as much as the people nowadays go to church and pray to Jesus or Jehovah. In particular, offerings were constantly made with the object of curing disease. The lack of sanitation as we understand it, the hopelessly unskilled medical men and women, the almost complete misunderstanding of disease generally, and the absurd treatment of the various ailments undoubtedly resulted in the spread of the most terrible maladies among the population, high and low. The accounts that have come down to us of some of the diseases prove how widespread were syphilis, elephantiasis, gonorrhœa, leprosy, and many of the worst kinds of female ailments. The unfortunate patient went from temple to temple, from god to god, with offerings and prayers, in the hope of being cured. Plaster representations of the afflicted parts of the body were suspended above the altars, as well as sin-offerings of cakes baked in the shape of the sex organs—cakes which, by the way, were eaten by the priests and priestesses. There was no regular medical faculty

in Rome, so that any one could call himself a doctor, and charlatanism reigned supreme. Just as in these days people are ashamed to be thought suffering from venereal disease, so it was in ancient Rome, the result being an indescribable medley of quack cures which made matters far worse for the unfortunate patient. Meanwhile it was the priest who gained, so great was the faith in the gods. Many of the latter were later transformed into Roman Catholic saints, who thus preside over the cure of various ailments exactly as the pagan priests pretended that their own gods were able to act as infallible medical experts. The result in both cases is, of course, the same.

The priests of Cybele made themselves experts at castration. There was always a great demand for eunuchs for various purposes in Rome; and, in spite of the fact that Domitian did his utmost to stop this horrible mutilation, many continued to mutilate not only themselves but also the helpless children who fell into their hands. Here again the Roman Catholic Church has faithfully followed its precursors, for it also has castrated unfortunate boys to preserve their voices singing in the churches dedicated to its own deities.

Rome seems always to have had a crowd of gods for all sorts of uses, but in particular for everything connected with love and its manifestations. For the Bacchanalian feasts not only was Comus invoked but also Venus, Hercules, Priapus, Isis, Hebe, and Cupid. Cupid was given the title of *Deus copulationis* by St. Augustine.

He reigned supreme at the end of the feast. Isis was the best counsellor in matters of love, while the other gods all had parts assigned to them. There was also a crowd of inferior deities whose functions are quite interesting. For example, there was a god called Conisalus who presided over the perspiration to which lovers were subject. He was pictorially shown as a phallus with the feet of a goat and the head of a faun with horns. Tryphallus was a tiny god with an enormous phallus; as were Pilumnus and Picumnus. Deverra was a goddess specially devoted to virgins; Viriplaca was invoked by quarrelling spouses; Genita-Mana saw that children were not born deformed; while Fauna, who was the favourite goddess of Roman matrons, was supposed to cover discreetly that which was not to be seen by the profane.

Rome was veritably a city of gods, as it is a city of similar saints nowadays; no wonder that superstition still survives in the religion which is the direct descendant of its primitive forms. And how much of the worship of Priapus still remains in Christianity will be shown in a succeeding chapter. Enough has been said, it is hoped, to show how widely the worship of sex in some form or other was distributed among one of the greatest races the world has known—a race distinguished alike for its laws, its conquests, its tolerance, and its literature. Had it not been superstition-ridden its influence on the modern world might have been still greater.

CHAPTER VII

INDIA'S PHALLIC FAITHS

WHETHER India or Egypt will eventually be found to be the cradle of the human race is a matter for experts to decide. One fact remains true, however: there is little to choose between them on the question of the worship of sex. All over the vast country—one might call it a continent—of India will be found both the worship and representation of the lingam and yoni. The religion of Siva abounds in phallicism, as does that of the Hindu Holy Trinity—Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva. Some of it is extremely gross.

As in other religions, the use of symbols in India is widespread. Some of them may mean nothing to the inexpert observer, but all initiated into the mysteries of the various religions or sects will recognize their phallic basis. For example, the Hindu Holy Trinity is symbolized by a pedestal (Brahma) on which is a vase (Vishnu) from which arises a column (Siva), the column representing the lingam, and the vase the yoni.

Representations of these two objects will be found sculptured both inside and outside dozens of Hindu temples, and some of the scenes in which they figure either in paintings or sculpture are of revolting obscenity—that is, judged by certain

European standards. For the Hindus themselves these things are part of their creed, and so do not excite the comments made by Western observers.

Chronology never was a strong feature either of Indian history or religion, so it is difficult to fix the date when phallicism was first introduced into India. But however far back one goes into the origins of Hinduism there will be seen its close connection with the worship of sex. Most of the early travellers to India remarked on the universality of this element and gave long descriptions of sexual manifestations associated with Indian religion. In some of their works will be found engravings illustrating many of the sculptures and scenes—though these were never meant, of course, for general circulation. As an example of the kind of scene common in India, one traveller noted a statue of Sita, the wife of Vishnu, surrounded by six completely naked fakirs who, on their knees and with their eyes turned towards the goddess, were actually making the offer of their lingams to her. Even at this day naked fakirs are a feature of Indian daily life, and they can be seen surrounding their divine statues in this state.

Many of the bas-reliefs in Hindu temples show astonishing ingenuity in the kind of sex postures for which the name of Pietro Aretino is famous—or infamous. But here again it may not be quite fair to judge the people of India by our own standards. These things shock Europeans; but

it is claimed that they inspire Indians with religious fervour and ideas.

Dulaure cites the description given by one of his travelling friends who had penetrated into a secret alcove devoted to the worship of Siva. Here there was elevated a figure of a lingam about three feet high. Below was an opening designed to imitate a yoni, and it was in this alcove that the priests initiated young girls into the mysteries of "love." These were the girls who were also trained to be dancers to amuse the ordinary public and consecrate themselves to the worship of Siva—with the aid of the priests.

But the form under which Siva is mostly adored—a form more sacred than the lingam—is known as the Pulleiar. This represents the union of the two sexes, and it is always found in the sanctuary of the temples. Small representations are hung around the necks of worshippers or used as amulets or preservers, and priests always carry one—in much the same way as Christian priests carry a crucifix or a cross. It is curious to remark, however, that the worshippers of Vishnu disapprove of this practice and despise the Sivites—exactly as Calvinists object to the worship of images as practised by Roman Catholics.

Siva was supposed to inhabit the mountain of Kailsa, and one traveller has given a description of a monument erected there in the god's honour. It was a square table enriched by precious stones, with a lotus having in its centre a triangle, the origin and source of all things. From this triangle

projects a lingam, the eternal God, making this spot its everlasting dwelling-place. It is supposed that the first phallus representing the god Siva appeared here for the first time, and it was divided by the god himself into twelve other lingams radiating light. Here also were celebrated the feasts of Priapus with savage and enthusiastic orgies. It is possible that these twelve lingams symbolized the signs of the Zodiac in some way—how is not now exactly known.

The worship of sex, in one form or other, is distributed very widely all over India. As a general policy, the British Government has always allowed the fullest freedom to all religions in the Indian Empire. It has, however, done its best to suppress thuggery—though there was a religious basis here—the burning of widows, the exposure of female children, and other relics of barbarism. But it was up against a very mighty force in the Hindu religion with its Priapism, its dancing-girls (who were really religious prostitutes), and the worship of Siva generally. No interference has been attempted in these directions. Of course many sects prefer to worship in secrecy; but no traveller in India can possibly ignore the widespread ceremonies in which some kind of sex-worship forms the principal attraction.

The priests of Siva used to decorate the lingams in their temples with garlands of flowers—which, by the way, recalls a similar scene in D. H. Lawrence's banned novel, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. So sacred was this ceremony considered that they

invariably bathed themselves first, to be "purified" for such a holy office. Joined with serpent-worship was a rite called *Nagapontchie*, where women replaced the priests. They also had to bathe themselves, after which they carried a lingam between two adders to a pond where they burned wood as a sacrifice, at the same time praying for long life for their husbands, a numerous posterity, and immense riches. The greater proportion of Hindus believed that these things were bound to follow the sacred rites. Then there was—possibly still is—another ceremony, which consisted of pouring milk on to a lingam. Drops of the then precious liquid given to dying people ensured a certain journey to Cailasson, the Hindu paradise. Other sects use water, but all are assured that after death they will be worthy to enter into Cailasson.

As for the fakirs, they are of all kinds and classes, most of them still using either their own or some artificial lingam as almost their only stock-in-trade. Until the true or artificial one is blessed, however, by a Brahmin, it is never recognized as of any use. After the blessing it acquires remarkable virtues.

When publicly performing the sacred rites, priests of Siva must be quite naked; no matter how obscene or inflaming are these rites, not the slightest suspicion of being influenced by them must be manifested by the holy men. If they showed any emotion whatever it would be noticed by the spectators—this is one reason why the

priests must be naked—and the penalties are severe.

Statues of Siva and other gods abound everywhere, many with lingams upon which young sterile women immolate themselves. That such a practice would render them fertile is universally believed. Many priests, however, prefer to substitute themselves for the sacred idols, and Dulaure drily remarks, in recording the fact, that the sacrifice would thus appear more holy and far more pleasurable to the "victims."

During the eight days of the feast of the Jugger-naut, the Brahmins would offer a young woman to the god. She would be interrogated as to her sterility or fertility, and then under cover of the darkness of the temple would be led to believe that she had commerce with the god and that her wishes therefrom would be granted. Similar trickery will be found in the history of other religions, not excepting even Christianity.

In one part of India, when the priests leave their temples they march out quite nude, ringing a bell. This brings all the women in the neighbourhood to the scene, and they profit by the occasion to worship Siva by kissing the sexual organs of the holy men. This devotion is expected also to be received without any sign of emotion, under pain of punishment.

Just as in all probability the legend of Osiris and Set was in part invented to account for the worship of sex in Egypt, so Indian priests have invented several fables concerning Siva, which,

while differing from one another in details, use the lingam in some way as a base for the story. It must be added, however, that Siva is known as the god of destruction as well as of reproduction. In South India he is the all-embracing deity, the supreme, and is called Mahadeva, the great god. He is shown with four hands and three eyes, and with a garland of skulls round his neck. He is generally seated and appears absorbed in thought. His weapons are the trident, the bow, the thunderbolt, and the axe. Like all or most gods he is married, his wife having several names—or perhaps he has several wives. The story of Siva is intensely interesting though, curiously enough, the various legends are not in Sanskrit. As serpents are responsible for thousands of deaths in India every year, it is quite probable that Siva, as the god of destruction, was originally a snake-god. Whether this is so or not, it is asserted that some of the doctrines of the Sivites “seem to have extended themselves over the greatest portion of mankind.” Paterson, in *Asiatic Researches*, adds :—

They spread among remote nations, who were ignorant of the origin and meaning of the rites they adopted, and this ignorance may be considered as the cause of the mixture and confusion of images and ideas which characterized the mythology of the ancient Greeks and Romans. In fact foreign nations could copy only the outward signs and cere-

monies. They could not be admitted beyond the threshold of the temple. The adytum was impenetrable to them. Kal and Kali assumed various names. Kal became Kronos, Moloch, Saturn, Dis, Pluto, and Typhon. Kali became Hecate, Proserpine, and Diana, who was worshipped with bloody sacrifice at Tauris. Siva in his character of the creative power became the Zeus triophthalmus (the "three-eyed," a special characteristic of Siva), Jupiter, and Osiris. His consort Bhavani became Juno, Venus, Cybele, Rhoea the Syrian goddess, the armed Pallas, Iris, Ceres, and Anna Perenna. The multiplication of deities arose from the ignorance as to the source of the superstition which they adopted, and the original meaning of the symbols. They supplied their want of information by fables congenial to their own national character and manners; hence arose these contradictions which made their theology a labyrinth of confusion.

Modern authorities will possibly question these conclusions, but perhaps the real truth is that, at some period remote in antiquity, the stories of the various gods began to multiply and were taken by travelling tribes all over Asia, Africa, and Europe, and embellished according to the country in which a particular story was domiciled. The fables of Zeus and Juno, of Siva and Bhavani, of Osiris and Isis, may all have had a common

origin not belonging to Rome, Egypt, or India. Hence the conglomeration of myths found in the story of Christ and Christianity, which seems to have borrowed from all countries its fables and miracles.

That Siva is a god of destruction is, of course, admitted. In addition, he is the god of life, or rather of generation, as has been already indicated. He is supposed to destroy periodically "the entire Kosmos—gods, men, and whirling stars." Brahmins actually admit that Siva sweeps away all gods, even Brahma, Indra, and Vishnu. One of the numerous legends against Siva told by the Brahmins shows him being subject to much the same temptation as was endured later by St. Anthony—that of a beautiful, but devilish, woman. Needless to say he did not fall. The Brahmins then produced a tiger, which they sent against Siva. The god, however, crushed it to death, and he still wears its skin. They then sent a dwarf with a terrible club charged with Vishnu's spells. Siva killed the dwarf, and the club still figures in all his images. The Brahmins then decided to castrate him, and brought all their magical powers to bear, with the result that they succeeded. One reason that is given for this mutilation is that Siva was of such an amorous nature that he made love to, and seduced, many of the beautiful women who served the priests. The lingam was then raised up as an object for worship, shameful for Siva, but honourable for the priests.

Another legend says that so large was the lingam

of Siva that it was cut into twelve parts, which gave birth to all human creatures—though possibly here again the number twelve has some connection with the Zodiac. Another legend says that the lingam, “flaming and burning, began to traverse the world and burn up the cities; and Durga, Siva’s wife, followed it, uttering the piercing lamentations that re-echo still in the temples. The amazed Brahmins fled for help to Brahma, who advised them to sacrifice to Mahadevi, and to pray to him to calm the fury of Siva, before earth, hell, and sky were burnt up.”

The result was that “it was settled that the Siva-Durga symbol should be set up as the chief object of worship in every temple in India. A search was also made for the remains of the charred Mahadeo. It was at last found, and then by miraculous multiplication thirty-nine portions of it were detached. Of these twenty-one were distributed among the number of temples on earth, nine were delegated to the temple of heaven, and even dark Patala got its portion, a solitary one, of the precious flesh.” All this seems to have a symbolism difficult for the Western mind to follow; though out of it still appears the sacred lingam of Siva, known as Mahadeo.

Hindus are generally known as Sivites or Vishnuites. All Sivite temples enshrine the lingam in a state of erection. It is made in many materials and, in size, ranges from four inches to many feet. Most of the worshippers carry representations of the lingam as an amulet, many of

which are perfect marvels of realism. However much the educated Hindu tries to explain away the worship of Siva and his wife Sakti as pure allegory, the whole subject is, in actual practice, exactly what it represents. The Hindu sculptors and artists leave nothing to the imagination. Sir G. MacMunn, in his book on the secret cults of India, quotes the following from the *Kuvalavandī* : " Sakti is the form of pleasure derived from *guthya* (the female organ). Siva is the *lingam*. From the union of these two is the cause of all joy in the universe." The "allegorical" concept in this is not very apparent. Nor is it in the description of " a brass representation of the lingam of Siva with Parbatti (another wife of Siva) embracing it in a state of ecstasy."

The Hindu religious writer, Sir R. G. Bandakar, says : " It is the actual generative organ of Siva that is contemplated and worshipped, but this ascetic contemplation deprives the idea of all grossness." And this is from the *Bhagavanta Purana* of Siva : " He whose seed is raised up, whose organ is raised, who sleeps aloft, who abides in the sky, the Lord of seed, who produces the seed." Compare the Biblical " His horn shall be exalted."

Just as Siva represents the male organ so does Sakti the female organ, and both have their worshippers. It is in Bengal and in Southern India that Sakti is mostly worshipped, and the yoni has honour paid to it there with all the intensity of devotion that a sex-ridden people can

show. The male devotees spend hours contemplating the yoni and many actually believe themselves to be women. The Saktis have secret meeting-houses and temples. Sir G. MacMunn says :—

The object of their devotion is a living, beautiful woman set before them, and the cult of the yoni is a very realistic one. Their séances, at which both sexes attend, are accompanied by excessive religious ecstasy which develops into extreme licence under the effects of stimulants. Also no one in Hinduism asks many questions as to the doings of those who conform to the Hindu customs as described.

Modern temples in India are decorated with such indecencies—to European eyes—that it is impossible to take a white woman into them; while there is hardly a sexual vagary or bestiality which a Hindu could not justify as an injunction from his deity. Moreover, superstition is rampant where the yoni is concerned; and it is a fact that a famous Hindu potentate who wanted an heir actually climbed through a cleft in a rock on Malabar Hill in Bombay—the cleft, of course, being symbolical of the yoni.

Whether Siva was or was not originally a snake or serpent-god is now difficult to determine. Certainly serpents have always been terribly feared in India, and thousands of deaths have been caused by them annually for centuries. Moreover,

serpents have been worshipped as a cult far back in the ancient world.

The worship of the serpent [says the author of *Ophiolatrea*], next to the adoration of the phallus, is one of the most remarkable, and at first sight unaccountable, forms of religion the world has ever known. Until the true source from whence it sprang can be reached and understood its nature will remain as mysterious as its universality, for that man could see in an object so repulsive and forbidding in its habits as this reptile to render worship to, is one of the most difficult problems to find a solution to. There is hardly a country of the ancient world, however, where it cannot be traced pervading every known system of mythology. Whether the worship was the result of fear or respect is a question that naturally enough presents itself, and in seeking to answer it we shall be confronted with the fact that in some places, as in Egypt, the symbol was that of a good demon, while in India, Scandinavia, and Mexico it was that of an evil one.

Some authorities—like Arthur Lillie—trace Siva-worship back to the Hindu cave-men. But Lillie insists that not only sex- but also bull-worship are Siva characteristics. The worship of Apis in Egypt is held by such an Indian authority as Colonel Todd to be of Hindu origin. In fact, other authorities, like Sir William Jones, wish us

to believe that even goddesses like Diana or Venus are clearly derived from Bhavani (Durga), the wife of Siva, because she, like Venus, presides over generation. Durga is represented in Indian art riding a bull, just as is Europa.

In Grant Allen's *Evolution of the Idea of God* is shown the close connection between Siva and Jehovah (or Yahveh), as both were symbolized by a stone upon which oil or wine is poured. And there can be little doubt that some of the Jewish "holy places" were, as Arthur Lillie maintains, "Mahadeos." And what else was in the Ark but a phallus, a stone like the lingam of Siva? What was the famous pillar of Jacob which he anointed with oil and which he called Bethel, the "House of God"? There are many points of resemblance between the worship of Baal, as narrated in the Old Testament, and that of Siva—even to the "prophet disguised with ashes" (2 Kings, xx. 38), which is even now the practice of the Yogis of Siva.

In their work on *Occultism and Love*, MM. Nagour and Laurent describe the kind of thing which happens to this day in India :—

Let us transport ourselves an instant in thought to Benares, the sacred city of the Hindus. The sun has risen. It is the hour of ablutions. Now, no water is more sacred or more purifying than that of the river Ganges. Into it men, women, and children descend and wash away all pollution. From a copper vessel

they pour the water on to their heads and chests while the women jet around them garlands of jasmin and carnations. The Ganges seems covered with flowers. Fakirs, as immobile as statues, their arms extended towards the rising sun, seem lost in mute contemplation; and at the same time Brahmins from high platforms expose to the crowd their sacred lingams. Above the river can be seen the palaces with their pyramids of chiselled stone on which are sculptured images of their gods and symbolical and sacred animals—a monstrous efflorescence of carving. Under the porches are enormous stone cows, while there are many images of Ganesha, the god of wisdom, with the head of an elephant. The ablutions are over; music is heard from the temples; the crowds press into the outer sanctuaries. The statues of the gods are crowned with flowers. But homage is particularly paid to their lingams, which are sprinkled with melted butter and crowned with Indian roses, by the women. These statues can be seen almost everywhere round the temples or cross-roads. And everywhere also can be seen the fakirs quite naked, their bodies covered with manure.

Round the temples are carried on palanquins images of Siva, Siva the Logos and Power, the god of doubtful form, at the same time man and woman, holding in one hand his lingam, and in the other a phallus of gold. The white-

robed priests carry with reverence phallic emblems, before which the crowd prostrate themselves. Before them, in the midst of the musicians, march the dancing-girls, their arms and legs bare, their ankles encircled with silver bracelets, their fingers covered with rings, and a golden ring in the right nostril. They wave their silken scarves and with the rhythmic movement of their hips they rattle the little bells attached to the borders of their skirts. In the temple a Brahman with shaven head is squatting, repeating at intervals: "I am Brahma, I am the Universe." To the slow rhythm of violas and tambourines the dancing-girls revolve in sacred contortions and evolutions, while all the time the Brahmans have had brought to the worshippers massive silver phalli ornamented with precious stones. The faithful kiss the phalli with reverence, sprinkling them with water from the Ganges. The women with hysterical contortions clasp the monstrous symbol, kiss it with frenzy, and then crown it with flowers. Sacred cows with gilded horns move freely among the crowd. After a while the Brahman raises himself and cries: "We are now going to wash away all impurity of sin! Let us make ourselves fruitful and prosperous!" And, touching his own navel and lingam, he adds: "There resides fire, the sun, and the moon." His assistants then anoint him with cow-dung, during which he recites to the onlookers the

marvellous history of Krishna, who had, by the time he was fifteen, seduced all the milkmaids in the kingdom, continuing with a recital of the virtues of Siva, the symbol of that Nature which never ceases to create and destroy.

It would therefore be quite wrong to imagine that it was only in ancient times that phallic worship took place in India. The truth is that it never was stronger than at present in some parts of India, particularly where the worship of Siva is prevalent. As has been shown, in those religious séances which are not public, but for which one has to become "initiated," Sakti is still being worshipped in the form of a living woman, true faith being consummated by the sexual act, in which all present take part.

India can be truly called the land of the lingam and yoni, for very little else is thought about by millions of Hindus. That these religious practices have not resulted in raising the moral standard can be seen by a perusal of Katherine Mayo's *Mother India*. Whatever educated Hindus may say, or even what Hindu women may themselves say, there are very few parts of the world where women in general suffer such utter degradation as in India. With this degradation goes horrible cruelty, as the large percentage of deaths of young "married" girls testifies. Millions of these poor unfortunates, if they do not die in child-birth, die of syphilis or some other sexual disease. Whatever the lingam or

yonis may originally have symbolized in religions in the past, it has now become sheer debauchery or depravity in India, and as such it should be considered. There may have been some excuse for ancient Rome and Greece. There is none whatever for modern India.

CHAPTER VIII

EARLY EUROPEAN FORMS OF SEX-WORSHIP

WHATEVER precisely constituted the religion of ancient Gaul or the Druids most historians are of opinion that until it was contaminated with that of the Romans it did not consist of the worship of either animals or humans. Perhaps the Phœnicians, who travelled so widely in the ancient world, may have tried to introduce phallic worship in some form into Gaul or Britain; but one can understand that priestly sects even in those days jealously guarded their religious privileges and were by no means anxious for innovations. This characteristic is typical of even modern priests.

The Gauls, though not chaste, were prudish; for they generally wore some sort of covering even when fighting "nude." Dulaure, however, thinks this may have been due to the climate more than to a desire to preserve some sort of decency. In any case it is a fact that many of the statues dating back to ancient Gaul wear drapery. Only after the Roman invasion did the Gauls have any kind of phallic worship. As for the Saxons, and the Scandinavian peoples generally, one of their gods, Fricco (called also Frisco), was undoubtedly phallic. Frigga was the female counterpart of this god—she was known as the goddess of voluptuous-

ness, and was certainly connected with Venus in some way. The name is still used in connection with eroticism. Fricco generally accompanies Wodin and Thor, and is represented with an enormous phallus; Frigga is shown holding a phallus in her hand. One writer, quoted by Dulaure, says that the Scandinavian women honoured the sun through the symbol of the phallus because they wished to see not only the earth but also themselves fruitful, and that they cared less for debauchery than for maternity; for nothing was despised among them more than sterility.

The ideas of the Romans with regard to Priapus followed them in conquest, and then through commerce and social intercourse. The result was soon apparent. The Gauls, the Britons, and the Germans all raised statues to this god of fruitfulness in their gardens and fields. In Spain Bacchus was adored under the name of Hortanes. Orgies in honour of the deity took place in ancient Nebrissa, a town in Andalusia. In France several monuments proving the existence of the cult still exist. Not only have statues of Priapus been discovered, but also enormous phalli cut out of white marble; while many curious bas-reliefs can be seen—phalli endowed with wings, and some ridden by women with reins. Many phalli have been found which were undoubtedly used by women as amulets, proving how strong was the idea that wearing something in the shape of a lingam would make the wearer fruitful.

In Antwerp the cult of Priapus was held in the greatest veneration, in spite of the advancement of Christianity. It was so powerful that it existed until late in the seventeenth century. In Germany it is known to have existed right up to the twelfth century. The same is the case with many of the smaller countries which make up Central Europe. In fact, the people inhabiting these districts preferred their phallic god to Christ. Dulaure quotes a significant letter written by the Prince of Saxe in conjunction with others to certain bishops in Germany :—

Every time that these fanatics unite to celebrate their religion they announce that their god Pripe-Gala asks for human heads. This Pripe-Gala is, according to them, no other than Priapus or Balphegor. When they have cut off the heads of Christians in front of the blasphemous altar of this god they start screaming and crying : “ Let us rejoice to-day ! Christ is vanquished, and our invincible Pripe-Gala is his conqueror ! ”

Once phallic worship became established in Europe following the Roman invasions, it was very difficult to eradicate. One can see this exemplified in the custom of Easter eggs—which is, of course, a survival of the old fertility cult. The custom has now become a business—millions of eggs in every conceivable form that ingenuity can devise are sold at Easter, and most of the people who buy

them and eat them have not the least idea respecting the why and the wherefore of the custom.

Thus when Christianity began to spread over Europe it found phallic worship so strong in some shape or form that it was only after centuries of intense struggle that the cult was vanquished—and even then not altogether overthrown. Christianity could brook no rival, and it was perhaps because of this and not altogether because of so-called indecency that it proved such a formidable enemy to phallicism. But, to conquer Priapus, Christ (or Christianity) had to employ subterfuge—that is, admit some of the pagan rites and call them Christian ceremonies. As Priapus could not be ousted in any other way, he was eventually embraced by Christianity and made a Christian saint. He was, says Dulaure, allowed to preserve his special characteristics of fecundity and even his monstrous phallus. He was honourably placed in the churches and thus invoked by sterile women. Apart from the gross fraud of this pious annexation, the priests often resorted to the same methods used by the ancient priests of Lampsacus against these women.

The combination of the two religions lasted several centuries, for women would reverently go to Mass wearing a Roman *fascinum*, which was actually a phallic amulet. In addition, they wore amulets made from the mandrake, that curious plant which grew so often in the shape of human beings, and very often also in the shape of a phallus; from which fact it came to be endowed

with extraordinary properties by mediæval medical men, as well as by quacks. As belief in fortune-telling in some shape or form has always been a characteristic of a great portion of the human race, and as it has always proved a formidable rival to Christianity, it is not surprising that many edicts against it were formulated by religious synods, and various penalties threatened against those who insisted on practising incantations or enchantments. Many of these prohibitions are still preserved, and from them can be seen the persistence with which the proscribed cults (so often connected with phallicism) survived in spite of awful penalties.

Moreover, many Christian churches all over Europe have sculptured representations, not only of undisguised phalli, but actually of erotic scenes. These are, it is true, often hidden in angles and corners, or by dirt, or even by being partially destroyed through age. Nevertheless they are there; and the curious can find some account of them in Dr. G. J. Witkowski's *Les Licences de l'Art Chrétien*, which is packed with details and illustrated. Dr. Witkowski has written a number of books on the subject, a perusal of which would leave no doubt as to the connection of phallicism with Christianity in a measure particularly horrifying to those believers who have an idea that the one thing which distinguishes Christianity from all other religions is its essential sex-purity. At all events, Witkowski agrees with Victor Hugo in following the counsel that, "when a thing is to be said, say it."

Although Roman Catholic writers claim that there is nothing whatever indecent in the sculptures which decorate Notre-Dame, Witkowski gives several instances. They cannot be described in these pages, but the illustrations which the author reproduces leave no doubt that the saintly sculptors employed by the Church to build the various abbeys, cathedrals, and churches took delight in portraying erotic scenes and making use of erotic symbols. Moreover, the Church tolerated these things. And it is not only in these ancient churches that indecency ran riot. One of the examples cited is contained in a missal in the library at Lambeth Palace. Among other licentious pictures drawn in this missal there is one of a man showing his posterior in the exact place which, when the book is opened, would be kissed by the faithful follower of the Roman liturgy.

The famous story of Heloise and Abelard was also illustrated in stone by the rude sculptors, who rarely left anything to the imagination. Actually there was little discovered in Pompeii, and now relegated to the Secret Museum at Naples, which was much worse than these representations of the mediæval lovers. Whether the real object of the Church in allowing the mass of indecencies to cover some of their sacred edifices was a moral one is an open question. By publicly exposing vice it may be that they thought they were glorifying virtue. But if this be true, what becomes of the "essential" difference between the old phallic and the new Christian religions? Nothing could

be plainer than the rough-hewn sculptures of phalli on Christian churches in many parts of France.

There are a number of churches in Germany which also equal those in France in matters scatologic; while there are also a few similar churches in England cited by Dr. Witkowski.

Belgium, with its Flemish grossness, has a large number of indecent sculptures represented not only on its holy buildings, but also on many of its public ones. Spain, Portugal, and Holland are also discussed in Witkowski's book; and in Payne Knight's *Worship of Priapus* will be found some of the things sculptured on churches in Ireland. No doubt these have been removed since his book was written, but one would like to know what exactly was in the mind of the priests who allowed them to be put up.

As for Italy, the Church there seems to have had a difficult task in getting rid of the morals and customs of the old Romans. It must have taken many centuries before Priapus, and Pan, and Bacchus, and all that these fertility gods stood for were entirely banished. The *Decameron* gives a faithful picture of Christian morality as understood by its priests and nuns in the fourteenth century. There seems but little difference from that shown in the *Satyricon* of Petronius. And it was but natural that some of the scenes in daily life were represented in the sculptures decorating the churches. The details given by Witkowski, together with reproductions of the sculptures,

show to what extent phallicism dominated the ancient Christian builders—who were often the priests themselves.

It should prove interesting to know exactly what “treasures” in the way of the “obscene” and the “indecent” are hidden in the Vatican. Perhaps a catalogue will never be issued. But enough has leaked out to show how sex has dominated the life of people in all ages, and how carefully the Roman Catholic Church has collected proof of this, and stored the proofs in the Vatican. And it can be added that representations of both Jesus and Mary have not been spared. The old artists were nothing if not naïve; they may have had symbolism in their minds, but they catered for an audience who preferred realism, and realism was in many cases what they got.

Though, as has been shown, phallicism came out in some form or other in the Christian Church in spite of many edicts and threats of severe punishment, the use of phallic symbols by the common people (and for that matter by the wealthy too) seems never to have died out—at least, until quite recent times. Mention has been made of the mandrake, and it is curious to note how often the plant is found referred to in ancient literature. That depository of myth and miracle, the Bible, has one of the earliest references to it in the story of Reuben and Leah his mother. It is obvious that the mandrake—because of the curious way it has of growing into the shape of a phallus—was looked upon as a sure procurer of fertility; for Rachel,

who was sterile, begged for some of the mandrakes which Reuben was giving to her sister. Leah already had to complain that Rachel had taken Jacob away from her, but so anxious was Rachel to get hold of some of the plant that she consented to allow Leah to lie with him in return. The result was two more sons and a daughter for Leah. Rachel then followed suit with the birth of Joseph—though whether these children were born because of the superior efficacy of the mandrake we are not told.

At all events, the cult of the mandrake can be found all over Europe. For example, the Knight Templars, when the Church was trying to destroy them as being too powerful a rival, were accused of having worshipped the mandrake in Palestine—a terrible crime in the eyes of the Holy See. But it required a great deal of fulmination by the priests to persuade the people that believing in the mandrake's occult powers was sheer superstition. In fact, many citizens of mediæval Paris used firmly to believe that wrapping the plant carefully in beautiful silks and satins was a sure preventive against poverty. The only ground for this and similar beliefs was the mandrake's supposed resemblance to the human form or the phallus. Indeed, it was seriously contended that the plant had sex as truly as men and women, even to the extent of pubic hair. It is worth recalling these facts in order to show the extent of the growth of sex-superstition all over Europe in Christian times. In fact, in this connection one cannot help citing

a little story from the famous, if diabolical, *Malleus Maleficorum* :—

A certain noble gentleman, it is said, having lost his virile member through some devilish arts, went to a witch to see if it was possible to restore it or have it replaced. She showed him a nest at the foot of a tree which contained several, and indicated that he could take his choice. When, however, he chose a large one she said : “ Don’t take that, it is not for you. *It belongs to a man of the people.*”

Stories like this were as current when Sprenger wrote his notorious work as they are now ; perhaps more so.

When the Church found it was impossible to eradicate the worship of certain phallic idols it metamorphosed them into Christian saints. One of the most famous of these was supposed to be originally the first bishop of Lyons. He was called Pothin, Photin, or Fotin, which was vulgarized into Foutin ; and the people, ready to adore a saint, found him to be a worthy successor to Priapus. In fact, he was soon held in the greatest veneration in Provence, in particular for sterile women, for impotent men, and for curing venereal diseases. The way he was approached in these matters was to offer him, as to a god, little images of the male and female sexual organs fashioned in wax ; and many people, a little less superstitious perhaps or more truly devout, would be scandalized to see the chapel in which the saint was raised in effigy strewn

with such offerings. Even the name was considered of almost equal efficacy, for very often people were actually named either Foutin or Foutine.

St. Foutin was also adored in Embrum; and when the Protestants captured this city during the religious wars in France in the sixteenth century they found among the principal relics in the church the saint's phallus. The faithful had adored it in much the same way as Priapus had been worshipped—wine used to be poured over the object, collected in a vase, and sold to women for douching purposes. The Protestants also captured a phallus in the church at Orange, and publicly burnt it. And both at Poligny and Viviers were found other St. Foutins.

In Auvergne there is, or was, a rock near the town of Limoges which, looked at from certain points of view, is distinctly like an enormous phallus. The inhabitants nearby call it St. Foutin. In passing, it may be pointed out that there are quite a number of these rocky phalli scattered all over the world. In some cases they are obviously mere freaks of Nature; in others they have been deliberately fashioned so, either for a joke or for the purpose of worship. One of the most famous was found in Pompeii, and photographs have been often reproduced. Hannay gives photographs of a column in Dorset which is clearly a phallus, and there are many so-called crosses in Cornwall, originally phalli, which were subsequently made into crosses when that county was invaded by Christian priests.

St. Foutin can even be found in Germany, as many ancient writers testify. And it was not always under this name that the metamorphosed saint was worshipped. He was called Guerlichon at Bourges, where the monks found it quite impossible to make the inhabitants see that he did not possess the same virtues as the god Priapus. Dulaure says that the sterile women "used to scrape off a certain part of St. Guerlichon, the part which was equally in evidence in Priapus, and mix it in water so as to form a miraculous beverage" certain to cure sterility.

Statues of St. Gilles in Brittany and St. René in Anjou were also characterized in the same way and used for the same purpose. Then there were St. Regnaud and St. Arnaud; the statue of the latter was carefully covered up so that only the sterile were allowed to see the phallus. In St. Arnaud's case the mere exhibition of the image was sufficient to perform a cure.

It is curious to note how legends can cluster round a name and eventually result in absurd deductions. For example, the first bishop of Landevenec, in A.D. 480 was called Guinole, or Guignole, or Guingalais, or some such name. He was eventually made a saint and endowed with the properties which distinguish Priapus. The women used to scrape off a "certain part" of his statue, mix the scrapings with water, and drink the beverage exactly as in the case of St. Guerlichon. The part never diminished, however, owing to the fact that it was movable and was pushed forward

from the back by the wily priests, and a new one substituted whenever it became worn out. But Dulaure says that the legends which clustered round the saint's ability to cure sterility came from imagining that his name was like the word *gignere*, which means to engender. The operations performed by the women were actually taking place as late as 1794 and are vouched for by contemporary witnesses—a tribute to the power of the Catholic Church to abolish Paganism by absorption !

In other parts of the country the powder scraped off the phallus used to be mixed with wine—whether sacramental or not does not seem to be known. And Dulaure states that even in his time some correspondents vouched for the fact that in certain outlying districts in France belief in these phallic practices was firm in the early years of the nineteenth century.

Records exist which show also a strong belief in similar superstition in Antwerp as late as the sixteenth century. There the god—or saint—was called Ters and he was supplicated on other and more innocent occasions for help because of his Priapic powers. Goropius in his book on the antiquities of Antwerp, written in 1569, related how shocked Geoffrey of Bouillon was at all this “indecent” adoration ; wishing to bring back the inhabitants of Antwerp to the true faith of Christianity, he had sent to them from Jerusalem, as an extraordinary gift, the prepuce of Jesus Christ which he wished them to adore as a sacred relic rather than the phallus of Ters.

Ters was eventually placed at the entrance of the temple of St. Walburge, but by then his sex characteristic had entirely disappeared, on account, it was claimed, of the use to which it was put by sterile women. Perhaps at this date even the word Ters may have disappeared as well as the statue.

In ancient Greece the *Phallophores* were the men who carried in religious processions phallic images at the end of long sticks. In France even as late as Dulaure's day (that is, 1805) a somewhat similar practice existed in Roman Catholic processions. In these, even women and children used to carry at the end of olive branches small loaves of bread fashioned in the form of a phallus. The priests used to bless these loaves and the women wore them as amulets for the rest of the year. Naturally the custom was not looked upon entirely with favour by the hierarchy, and the Church did its best to suppress the rites by what is known in these days as "sublimation." Instead of scrapings off the statue, sterile women were asked to drink from the waters of a fountain dedicated to a saint or blessed by him; or to kiss the bolt of a church or a bar of iron called the *Bracquemart of Rolland*; or to make a nine days' pilgrimage to certain saints famous for their fruitfulness, like St. Foy or the saintly Virgin of Orcival in Auvergne—in whose church, by the way, was a pillar which had to be embraced by those desiring children.

In the little church at Saint-Fiacre in Mouceaux there is a stone called the armchair of St. Fiacre, which had the power of making sterile women

who sat on it, after removing all their clothes, capable of bearing children. Other practices to obtain the same effect were also slowly but surely introduced by those priests who were anxious to wean their flocks from pagan superstitions—often, however, without result. As Dulaure puts it :—

These changes have not taken place everywhere. There are peoples who, sodden in a state of intense ignorance and superstition, prefer to rest in the darkness unilluminated by the light shed on other nations, and unable to see the strange contradiction in their conduct which results in mixing the worship of Priapus with that of Christian saints; and who have thus piously preserved even to this day the absurd practices of centuries of barbarism.

All this applies equally to the people of Italy as well as of France. It is only to be expected that in this country all sorts of superstitions and practices should have remained as a heritage from ancient Rome. Here, as has been shown, the country was dotted with statues of Priapus or Pan; and almost all the other gods were represented in a state of nudity. For centuries the people have been used to sights which would shock most moderns, or at least would have shocked those brought up in the shadow of a prim Victorianism. Whether modern nudism has changed the point of view prevalent up to the war period of 1914–1918 may be a matter of opinion—or congratulation.

At all events, for centuries Italians have worn amulets fashioned in the shape of a phallus. This was particularly noticed by Sir William Hamilton (the husband of Nelson's Lady Hamilton) in 1780. He wrote a famous letter to Joseph Banks, President of the Royal Society, in which he related what he saw while Ambassador at the Court of Naples.

A fair used to be held every year at a little town called Isernia, during which a procession in honour of the saints Come and Damien took place. The people in the neighbouring districts, attracted both by devotion and pleasure, came in crowds, each village having its distinguishing costume; in particular married women, young girls, and prostitutes all wore some distinctive dress. But it was the sale of phallic images, made in wax, called *vœux* or *ex-voto* which attracted most attention. They were bought everywhere by Christians as offerings to their saints in the hope of being cured of any venereal disease or for warding off sterility. These phalli, in all sorts of shapes and sizes, were sold from a basket; one made his (or her) choice and paid as much as one could afford. "The more you give the greater will be your reward," was the constant cry of the sellers. In the near-by church stood two tables, each with a priest. Everybody who entered was greeted with the cry: "This way with money-offerings for Masses and Litanies," or "This way for the votive-offerings." It was in response to the latter that the people would deposit their waxen phalli on the table reserved for them.

The women were particularly fervent in their

devotions to the two saints—representing, of course, Priapus. As a matter of fact, the women more than the men would help to decorate the church with the waxen images, which, before leaving, they kissed devotedly. Not that this always proved efficacious for curing sterility; the women were required to take part in another ceremony, which was to sleep for two nights in the Capucin Fathers' special church, or that of the Cordeliers; or, if these were already full, to sleep in the Hermitage of St. Come. And it was a remarkable fact that in this way the fructifying influence of St. Come and St. Damien was extended even to young virgins and widows.

At the altar the holy oil of St. Come was used for anointing, and it was also put up in little flasks to be used privately for rubbing the loins. At the time of writing his letter, A.D. 1780, Sir William Hamilton was told that more than 1400 of these flasks had been sold at the particular fête he was describing.

So much for Italy. At about the same period Dulaure describes an English society, *The Very Ancient and Powerful Order of the Beggars Bennison and Merryland*, of which Sir Louis Chambers was the Grand Master. Its private seal had a clearly designed phallus in the centre with an anchor above and a fortress below, though the exact reason for such symbols was a mystery known only to initiates. That there were secret societies in the eighteenth century in England which had as an object of worship Priapus in some shape or form cannot be doubted. Houses of prostitution were

open and unashamed. The pictures of the sexual life of the times given in such books as *Fanny Hill*, illustrating the general laxity of manners among the people, are only too true. In the famous *Mémoires* of Casanova will be found his experiences in England, and his descriptions of life in London and elsewhere have been corroborated in almost every particular. There may not have been the actual adoration of statues of Priapus or Pan; but sex-worship as such had little to learn from the ancients. And Dulaure points out that quite a number of the customs and practices of the old pagan peoples were in common usage among Christians almost to his own day, without the motives which, to some extent, excused the Romans and Greeks and Egyptians. For them the worship of Priapus meant in addition the worship of the sun-god as the great regenerator of life, a symbol of the fruitful powers of Nature; but for Christians phalli simply meant some sort of protective amulet or lucky talisman without the actual adoration of the god.

Whether there is really very much difference depends on the point of view taken with regard to religion. If, as modern investigators are beginning to see, religion is based on credulity, fear, and a wrong interpretation of the facts of Nature, then it would not be unfair to say that there is really no difference between phallicism and "true" religion, no matter by what name one called the latter. There may be a little difference on the question of ethics; but, on religious fundamentals, none whatever.

CHAPTER IX

SEX IN CHRISTIAN HISTORY

HISTORY has meant in the past, for a large number of historians, the story of kings and queens and the records of battles between nations. This interpretation, of course, has produced a valuable commentary on the periods dealt with, but it is increasingly recognized that the story of the social activity of the common people is infinitely more valuable as a guide to reform and progress. It also makes a fascinating study, as indeed does everything appertaining to primitive beliefs, customs, and morals. The study of the works of a host of minor writers on the "antiquities" of the towns and villages and counties in which they have dwelt sheds a flood of light on social history of all kinds, but especially on what can be broadly called religion. Sufficient has already been said on the close connection of religion and sex, but a few more details on the sex customs of our ancestors up to comparatively recent times will perhaps prove not uninteresting to the student of social and religious history.

The Roman Catholic Church, which always claims to have made marriage a sacrament, and therefore indissoluble, does admit, however, that there are exceptions. Cases occur where the

marriage has never been consummated and therefore can be dissolved by the Church. The priests in charge of such cases were wont to order the man and woman concerned to appear completely nude before a jury of doctors and matrons, so that they could decide whether there was any impotency or other sexual cause for the failure of the marriage. It may be added, however, that some even of the old writers hesitate to give the actual details of what happened at these "trials," so obscene are they. At all events the whole procedure was eventually abolished in France by order of Parliament in 1677.

Against men and women convicted of adultery the punishments were particularly marked with indecency. Both men and women had to march through the streets in a state of nudity or follow solemn religious processions wearing no clothes. If a woman was allowed in certain cases to wear a chemise, she was actually made to carry some heavy stones in it. Sometimes, again quite nude, she would be made to sit on a donkey facing his tail, and thus led through the streets. The mistress of the Duke of Orleans, the brother of Louis XIII, was in this way forced to go through the streets of Paris.

On the Continent, and quite possibly in England, there was often in mediæval times a close proximity between brothels and abbeys. In fact, brothels of this nature were in France actually called *abbayes*. Records still exist showing how various towns profited by these houses of prostitution,

to which were always allotted certain streets. Kings and queens—such as Charles VI and Charles VII of France and Jeanne I of Naples—accorded special privileges to brothels or actually organized them.

Some Popes are not exempt from the same desire to institute houses of prostitution. Julius II issued a Bull on July 2, 1510, authorizing the establishment of a brothel in a special quarter of Paris, and Popes Leo X and Clement VII later confirmed the order.

All this is interesting when one takes into consideration the number of inhabitants which, on an average, towns contained four or five centuries ago. It is doubtful whether any had a population of more than a few thousands, and yet they always had their brothels and their churches.

Sex was also exploited at many of the old feasts and processions. Lady Godivas were by no means as rare as one would think from the legend of Peeping Tom. Nude girls often accompanied processions given in honour of some victorious general. *Tableaux vivants* representing scenes from mythology, or the Bible, were extremely popular, and nothing whatever was left to the imagination when Bacchus or Noah was the principal figure. Ham discovering his father drunk and exposing himself was shown without shame.

On the stage was the same curious mixture of naïveté and obscenity. Plays depicting Adam and Eve before the Fall were quite common, and it

was only after the Fall that the actor and actress put on fig-leaves. Hone, in his book *Ancient Mysteries Described*, has collected the details of some of these religious plays. A note on the Coventry Mysteries says that "there can be no doubt that Adam and Eve appeared on the stage naked. In the second pageant of the Coventry MS. at the British Museum, Eve, on being seduced by the serpent, induces Adam to taste the forbidden fruit. He immediately perceives their nakedness, and says to her,

Se us nakyd be for and be hynde,

Woman, ley this leff on thi pryvyte,
And with this leff I shall hyde me."

Warton says, "This extraordinary spectacle was beheld by a numerous company of both sexes with great composure: they had the authority of scripture for such a representation and they gave matters just as they found them in the third chapter of Genesis."

Hone adds that Adam and Eve were also naked in the Chester Mystery, and clothed themselves in the same way.

It is interesting to note that many of these mysteries or miracle plays had as their base not the Canonical Gospels but the Apocryphal ones. Joachim and Anna (Mary's parents) are almost always introduced with her, and the dialogue generally turns on Mary's virginity, or her "miraculous espousal with Joseph," and insistence on her absolute chastity. Joseph's jealousy,

of course, makes piquant reading in the light of subsequent events. The representation of the Deity was always taken as a matter of course—in striking contrast to our own times, when our censors hold up their hands in horror at the idea of showing a representation of Jesus or Jehovah on the stage or screen. In one of the old mysteries “God appears and instructs an Angel to desire Joseph will abide with Mary, she being pregnant by God himself.” Needless to say, Joseph is convinced and delighted to think that the father of the coming child was God, and not a mere man, and he promises Mary “that hereafter he will serve her and worship the child.” It is doubtful whether these plays would ever have attained such popularity as they undoubtedly did with mediæval audiences if it had not been for the sex allusions and discussions in the dialogue. And one might add that modern audiences evince just as much interest and curiosity as did their ancestors in these matters. The question of virginity and chastity seems to have been one of supreme importance in the old days—at least where Mary was concerned. Nowadays it does not perhaps appear to be of such burning consequence.

Mythological plays were also produced, a very popular one being *The Judgment of Paris*. A description of one representation of this play has come down to us as acted in Lille on the occasion of the entry of Charles the Bold into that town in 1468. Three Flemish women played the rôle of the goddesses. The one who took the part of

Venus was tall and much like the women Rubens loved to paint. Juno was also tall, but her figure was rather thin and emaciated. Minerva was shown as a kind of dwarf, her body being supported by spindle legs. All three goddesses appeared on the stage quite naked; in any case the Flemish actor who took the part of Paris would not seem to have had much difficulty in making his choice.

On the Paris stage there were regular productions of highly erotic plays, many of which can still be read in privately printed works. The great mediæval poets and writers, as well as some of the clergy, were always fulminating at the laxity of the manners of their day, though it is by no means certain that they always had cause. One meets with the same kind of denunciation in these days, when quite harmless customs are denounced from the pulpits. Women have throughout the ages preferred to dress as it pleased them, and throughout the ages men seem to have taken a delight—or was it just impudence?—in criticizing or attacking this right of women to please themselves. At all events, we find Dante referring to the immodesty of the women of Florence, who showed themselves in public, in his opinion, too *décolletées*. Petrarch attacked the extreme corruption and licentious manners of the people of Avignon, especially when the popes were living there; and other writers of the same period attacked the open unashamedness of the people generally. Here is how a preacher of the fifteenth century attacked the morals of his age:—

How rare is modesty among men of the century ! They never blush openly to blaspheme, to gamble, to rob, to lend money, to perjure themselves, to lie, to sing [? rude songs]; while their women uncover their arms and chests so as to encourage such horrible sins as adultery, fornication, rape, sacrilege, and sodomy.

Low-necked dresses, more than anything else, seem to have aroused the ire of such preachers. This temptation of the flesh was the devil's work and would lead to perdition; and so preoccupied with the whole sexual question were most of the priests that they seemed to think that the women were wearing nothing at all from the waist upwards, and were therefore genuine emissaries of the Devil. Dulaure gives specimens of the sermons which were hurled at the unfortunate people by the enraged men of God when they denounced the laxity of the morals surrounding them; the preachers enlarged on the dreadful punishments which would be inflicted on women, particularly on those who had the hardihood to expose a little of their breasts. One example cited to a horrified congregation was that of a priest mourning the death of his mother. He wanted to know the state of her soul, and prayed fervently to God to find out. Later, when he was near an altar, he saw his mother bound in a sack between two demons. Her hair, in the ornamenting of which she had taken great pride all her life, was now in

the shape of flaming serpents; while her breasts and neck, which she used to expose, were possessed by a toad which vomited torrents of fire.

Even Montaigne, whose sane, calm, and common-sense point of view of men and things has given his essays a deathless reputation, attacked both men and women for the exposure of their bodies; and since then possibly thousands of works have been written on the same subject, declaiming against all kinds of "nudities." In spite of all this fulmination, nudism seems in these modern times to have come to stay; and it is complete nudism, not just the uncovering of one's neck.

The curious thing about the whole matter is that, side by side with all this attack on the laxity of morals in the old days, every now and then there would appear something in the dress of both men and women which was far more indecent than mere nudity. What Rabelais called the "cod-piece" was worn by men, yet nothing could be imagined more suggestive or actually vulgar and ridiculous. Even Montaigne was shocked at its useless indecency. Moreover, people habitually wrote and spoke in an obscene way. There are things in some of the old writings quite impossible to reproduce nowadays, which were just the habitual ways of writing and speaking. The sermons left nothing to the imagination, for the celibate priests, who felt it was their duty to look after the morals of their flocks, made sexual delinquency the chief object of their attack, and

they seemed particularly incensed against any deviation from the path of chastity—even fulminating against those other priests who kept concubines, a habit rampant in the fifteenth century.

In France at the same period were published large numbers of poems and other writings which showed the same laxity of morals as was attacked by the preachers. They were quite erotic, and though some of them have become classics, they are read in these days more for their eroticism than for their classicism. Boccaccio, Rabelais, the *Heptameron*, the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles*, all give a wonderful picture of contemporary life, according with the denunciations of the preachers as far as morals were concerned; and there were published a large number of similar works known to the curious, which can be bought by the collector either in the sale-room or found under the section marked *erotica* in booksellers' catalogues.

It can, of course, be urged that the prevalent laxity was the reaction against the increasing fulminations of the clergy, who were making sex a hateful as well as a dirty thing; they were trying to show that the sexual desire was, as the old Christian Fathers insisted, the work of the Devil; that woman was a temptress who must be resisted if Hell was to be avoided. The Greeks had glorified the body; the Christians were doing their best to make it a thing of shame; while the people, backed up by the poets and writers, went their own way, and refused to give up what was

for them a legitimate desire. The historian, therefore, must not take as true all that was said by the old monks, who preached so incessantly against sex; a balanced judgment must admit, however, that things were done openly which, in the ultimate, were attacked by public opinion as being too gross, and therefore not good for public morals.

It is still an open question whether we should allow children freely to roam about a library containing erotic works—books not allowed by law to be published as being pornographic. The objections against such works can be urged also against many of the classics like the *Decameron*, which can be bought anywhere. But it is very difficult to get unanimous opinion as to what one ought to do with books like *Fanny Hill* or *Lady Chatterley's Lover*.

D. H. Lawrence considered that such a universally read book as *Jane Eyre* is far nearer pornography than the *Decameron*.

Charlotte Brontë was in the state [he says] where the strongest instincts have collapsed, and sex has become something slightly obscene, to be wallowed in, but despised. Mr. Rochester's sex passion is not "respectable" till Mr. Rochester is burned, blinded, disfigured, and reduced to helpless dependence. Then, thoroughly humbled and humiliated, it may be merely admitted. All the previous titillations are slightly indecent,

as in *Pamela*, or *The Mill on the Floss*, or *Anna Karenina*. As soon as there is sex excitement with a desire to spite the sexual feeling, to humiliate it and degrade it, the element of pornography enters.

Lawrence goes so far as to say that "many so-called pure people have a nasty pornographical side to them, and never was the pornographical appetite stronger than it is to-day." Thus it may well be argued that it was the old priests who were nasty and pornographically minded, and not the people and such writers as Rabelais whom they attacked.

Yet it is true that many of the stories which have come down to us from these early centuries deal with sex in such an open and unashamed manner that they have roused the ire of even such broad-minded historians as Dulaure. To show the gross obscenity of the age he fills pages of his work with extracts (some of which he has left in the original Latin) of the kind of writings prevalent in the fifteenth and succeeding centuries. He sends his readers to the famous work of Brantome, the *Gallant Ladies*, with its terrible picture of the dissolute morals of the sixteenth century; though it is true that Brantome is occupied more with painting the private lives of kings and queens, and the ladies and gentlemen of the royal courts, than with private citizens.

And it is not only in the sexual field that we find a laxity of the moral conscience. In the

political arena the works of Machiavelli, Cardinal de Retz, Richelieu, and many others show how widespread was political depravity, and how terrible and foully cruel were the wars waged by such monsters as Simon de Montfort, Blaise de Montluc, or Cæsar Borgia.

Obscene as some of the writings of the epoch were, the paintings and tapestries were even worse. Many of the greatest artists lent their talent to depicting scenes of the grossest debauchery. In fact, it is amusing to find that some of the artists would take just as great pains in depicting scenes from the lives of the pagan gods, with all the realism they could muster, as they did in painting the lives of the Christian saints or gods. It is, of course, well known that some of the most famous paintings of the Virgin Mary were simply portraits of models, some of whom were certainly not married when they gave birth to the children who posed as the infant Jesus. It is said that one of Raphael's best-known Madonnas had his mistress as its model, and this must also have been the case with many of the other paintings of the Virgin. Just as the Churches were the greatest patrons of religious pictures, so were the wealthy nobles of obscene ones. And, as soon as the woodcut enabled a large number of prints to be run off, erotic prints were sold in thousands to the people. Even Rembrandt has left some famous erotic etchings to posterity, and there are large numbers of etchings and engravings in this genre found in

many private collections. Some of the most notorious—like those made to illustrate the first editions of the “infamous” sonnets of Pietro Aretino—have been lost, but enough remain to show how difficult it has always been to keep sex out of art.

Although the Roman Catholic Church publicly protested in the name of purity against all this eroticism and obscenity, it is a fact that hundreds of religious manuscripts (such as those called *Hours*) are decorated with pictures which Dulaure states are of revolting indecency. And he points out how often the statues of saints, and even of Jesus, are shown far more *naked* than nude. They are often represented in the most suggestive attitudes. The same may be said of many stained-glass windows; and though it may be urged that the people of the epoch were naïve, and that the way they approached the depictings of the various incidents was typical of their time, it should be pointed out that the priests were always attacking this laxity of manners, thus showing that at least they knew that the artists were going a little too far.

Then, again, many of the peculiar sects of Christianity which broke away from the mother Church are distinguished by a sex obsession. For example, the Adamites, like the modern nudists, insisted on going about in a state of nature, so as to emulate our so-called first parents. The Anabaptists made it a point of going about in processions also all or nearly all naked; and the

Flagellants were almost as bad. Flagellation was a custom of the Church from its earliest years, but it became quite common from the twelfth century, when the confessors themselves used to flog their penitents. Many kings, like St. Louis of France and our own Henry II, allowed themselves to be flogged. People who had been excommunicated, and who wished to be received back into the Church, used to be flogged entirely nude in public, and often in procession. This religious ceremony took place as late as the sixteenth century, but for centuries bands of Flagellants would go about the towns and villages of Germany almost if not quite naked, flogging each other without pity. In Germany the sect increased in numbers, though they were ostracized by both kings and popes. It is curious that Germany appears always to have had a penchant towards nudism, as the modern craze more or less originated there just after the last war. Other sects seem to have had the stupid notion that they were pleasing the Almighty by going about with heads or feet uncovered, or dressed only in shirt or chemise, according to sex.

There were many religious ceremonies, or at least ceremonies connected with religious festivals, in which indecency, to put it mildly, was part of the show. Both layman and clerics used to force themselves into private houses, enter the bedrooms, uncover the sleepers irrespective of sex, and sprinkle them with holy water. As it was the fashion to sleep quite nude it is an open

question whether this “purifying” ceremony was performed entirely for religious reasons. Here is a contemporary account taken from *Concilium Nanetense, anno 1491*, as given by Dulaure, though it must be pointed out that the custom was prohibited in Nantes and other towns :—

Priests and other persons scatter themselves through the town, enter houses and bedrooms, seize people who are asleep in their beds, carry them quite naked into the public squares, force them into the churches against the altars, and then throw holy water on to them. But what alarms the religious authorities is the fact that so many accidents occur and even mutilations. Moreover, there are people both religious and secular who, on the first of May, force themselves into houses, steal what they can, and insist that the owners must buy back the stolen goods if they want to have them back.

But, though forbidden in some towns, the custom was prevalent in many others. It was taken advantage of by lovers towards their sweethearts, who were thus often surprised in bed, and smacked like naughty schoolchildren. French history—that is, the history contained in private memoirs, not in school books—is full of anecdotes of this kind, in which kings and dukes have their share and are rather proud of it. Even as late as the eighteenth century Dulaure reports that

similar customs were taking pace in Lorraine and Piedmont.

The truth is that the so-called good old days were mostly, to modern eyes, of a revolting indecency, to say nothing of horrible cruelty, perfidy, injustice, and intolerance. It would require very great courage to publish the *truth* from contemporary accounts; people prefer not to think of what happened in the days when religion reigned supreme. Those who still believe in religion apologize for the disgusting morals by claiming that the Church was always protesting against the tyranny of the rulers and the obscenities of the people. But what excuse can they give for the wholesale concubinage of the clergy? It was professed openly without shame, and even accepted as quite natural. Scenes of the most infamous debauchery were practised, often in front of the holy altar. This is admitted in a letter written by Pope Urban IV, who naturally opposed these practices. Taxes were actually paid by the clergy to be allowed to have concubines; it was considered much more pleasing to the Church to live in this way than to commit the far greater sin of marriage.

It is impossible in the limited space of this essay to give anything like a detailed description of what Lea calls "sacerdotal celibacy." The reader is referred to that historian's monumental history for a full account. But the description given in a book entitled *Speculum humane vite* seems to sum up the situation pretty well:—

The more free are the clergy, the more licentious they are, the more do they deliver themselves to all depravities. One woman is not enough for one priest; for, besides the one who lives in his house as his wife, he possesses several young girls as concubines.

As for nuns, they do not seem to have been a whit behind the priests in licentiousness. In France their convents were called "places of pleasure," or even brothels, and many famous convents were known as such because of the debaucheries with which they were credited.

To name but a few, the Abbey of Maubuisson near Pontoise, those of the towns of Saintes and Trinité at Poitiers, that of Villemur in Albigeois, of Lys near Melun, of Saint Catherine les Provins—all were celebrated in France for the intrigues of their inmates with Franciscan friars; and Dulaure, in giving details, insists that the debaucheries of the priests of antiquity were never greater than those of Christian priests. All this is admitted by ecclesiastical historians; and the fact that a long series of laws for over twelve centuries were promulgated to keep priests absolutely continent is proof enough of the difficulty in enforcing celibacy.

Even the popes themselves provide striking examples of the extreme debauchery prevalent in the Middle Ages. Few were without mistresses; while some of the scenes stated to have been enacted in the Vatican, even allowing for exaggeration,

defy description. It is the fashion of the times to whitewash certain notorious figures of history; but the licentiousness of many of the popes is too well attested by contemporary witnesses to be seriously challenged.

For authoritative details Lea's *Sacerdotal Celibacy* can be confidently consulted. At all events, some even of the popes were horrified at the extent of the debauchery in the Church; and Pope Pius II actually said, as late as the fifteenth century: "If there are good reasons for forbidding priests to marry, there are better ones to allow them to do so."

The good old times, then, may have had some advantages over those in which we are living; but the candid historian would require a pretty powerful microscope to see them. As Dulaure says: "Indecency prevailed everywhere—indecent in the laws, indecent in public morals and in private life, indecent in games, in all the arts, in civil ceremonies, in worship, and even in the most sacred places." And the questions must be posed: In what way has the introduction of Christianity into Europe taught a better or higher morality than that of ancient Greece and Rome? Were the peoples of mediæval France, Germany, England, Italy, or Spain imbued more with what we now call Humanism than the old Greeks and Romans? Was there more kindness, charity, love? Were dumb animals and children better treated? Were the prisons of Christian Europe more humane? Was there more learning, a

greater delight in the arts? Was there less slavery? Were women more honoured or better treated? Were the immoral practices associated with phallic worship in antiquity worse than the almost universal licentiousness of priests and people in historic Christendom? Can anyone seriously maintain that the actual worship of sex in Priapus or Venus was very much different from the adoration paid to "holy" relics like the prepuce¹ of Jesus or the intimate wearing apparel of Mary?

If in Protestant countries there was no relic-worship there seems to have been a curious mixture of Puritanism, in its worst form as regards sex, with quite open shamelessness. The picture of sex-life given in such a book as *Fanny Hill*—or even in *Tom Jones* and the works of Smollett, to say nothing of Hogarth—proves that in the England of the eighteenth century, in spite of the thunders of Protestant divines, there was little difference between it and France during the same period. The French were perhaps not quite so gross; there may have been far more beauty and elegance and refinement in the better classes. But "love" was elevated in France to a fine art, or even a science. Life under the Regency was a per-

¹ It may perhaps interest the curious to state that there are at least twelve prepuces of Jesus on record. There is one at Coulombs, another at the Abbey of Charroux, a third at Hildersheim in Germany, a fourth in Rome, a fifth in Antwerp, a sixth at Puy en Velay, and so on. There are also quite a number of navels of Jesus—though it is only fair to say that those which have been examined were found to be anything but navels. Still, they always perform miraculous cures!

petual search for "*l'amour*"; it reached its most scandalous heights under Louis XV. His notorious "Parc aux Cerfs" became more than a by-word—and it is particularly amusing to learn that the French monarch had, attached to this brothel, a private chapel, to which he almost invariably resorted before participating in the scenes of debauchery to which he was so particularly addicted.

The sex-life in France during the eighteenth century was naturally reflected in its literature. If, as the Goncourts insisted, the age was "woman," it is not surprising to find that what is called the lighter literature dealt almost exclusively with the fair sex, and mostly from a purely sexual standpoint. To mention but a few writers, de Sade, Retif de la Bretonne, Andrea de Nerciat, Mirabeau, Crebillon le fils, Casanova, Voltaire, Diderot, and many others all contributed their share to the erotic literature of the times; and if England could reply only with *Fanny Hill* it was chiefly because almost the whole of the works of the more engaging Frenchmen were translated and circulated in this country.

During the nineteenth century a determined effort was made by the Governments of both England and France to stamp out what came to be called "indecent" literature. Writers and publishers were severely dealt with—and, contrary to the received opinion, the punishments were quite as severe in France—but the sale of these books, although repressed, did not seriously

diminish. Even in America, with such a puritanical Government agent as Anthony Comstock to conduct the campaign, there was always a continual supply and demand. Religion and public morality may have condemned sex as in the main a dirty business; but it was found in actual practice that the public was extremely obstinate on the point.

At all events, when Freud began to publish his epoch-making works on psycho-analysis he was hailed with delight by a large proportion of the public. Under the mistaken notion that he meant by sex exactly what people had always meant by that term, it was considered that here at last was some scientific justification for the glorification of the sexual urge. Books on the sexual question have multiplied with astonishing rapidity. The free discussion of birth control is a feature of our age, and it has contributed an immense share to the more open enlightenment of a subject which, under the influence of religion particularly, was considered to be the primeval sin. The result may be that sex is given perhaps a far greater share in our lives than it merits.

But enough has been said to show that in all ages the sexual question has obsessed the minds of people as of paramount importance. Nothing in the history of mankind has engrossed men and women to such a degree—admitting, of course, that the satisfaction of hunger is the first imperious necessity. Even among so-called savages sex questions have the greatest significance. We, who

are more civilized, and who have raised love to a high pinnacle, who have idealized it, who have dedicated our finest literature and art to it, may consider that with the "lower" races it is merely a brutal animal passion. But their own sexual taboos and intricate customs in puberty and marriage show that, with them, there is some philosophy, some general inkling of its prime importance in human life. Indeed, all peoples have intricate sex customs, the study of which is proving one of the most fascinating investigations in sociology. And it is interesting to note that many of the most extraordinary observances in which sex has a share are looked upon as part of religion's duties.

Take, for example, the custom of offering one's wife and daughters to a strange visitor. Marco Polo, the famous thirteenth-century traveller, records that it was the regular custom of the inhabitants of Tartary for the head of the house to order his wife, his daughters, and female relatives to satisfy all a visitor's desires. In fact, the master would even abandon the entire house as long as the stranger lived in it. This was considered true religion on the part of all the inhabitants.

When in 1251 Mongu Khan ascended the throne, one of his first enactments was to abolish the custom, and for three years it was not practised. In the meantime, a famine occurred in the land, as well as other misfortunes; and, in desperation, the people sent envoys to the monarch begging to

be allowed to follow the old customs of hospitality. And the Khan, though he knew his law had nothing whatever to do with the famine, was obliged to repeal it. Marco Polo records that it was still in usage when he visited the country.

As a matter of fact, similar sexual customs can be found in all parts of the world, and more often than not they are intimately connected with religion. Not, of course, with Christianity, which so many people are apt to consider the only genuine kind of religion. What we call paganism was and is just as real religion to pagans as Christianity is to those who insist that Christ is God's final word on the subject. To-day, after two thousand years of Christianity, there are far more non-Christians than Christians in the world. However stupid pagan customs may seem to some of us, it must never be forgotten that there are quite a number of people who see no essential differences in man's religions. What exactly is the difference between the distinctive dress of an African witch-doctor and that of the average Christian priest?

Christians hold up their hands in horror at polygamy; but polygamy, which has taken a long time to die, enjoys a powerful religious sanction. The early Jews were undoubtedly polygamists; according to Maimonides, "the Jews of Europe had a plurality of wives as late as the thirteenth century." The concubinage of Christian priests throughout the Middle Ages was simply polygamy. Any man who keeps mistresses in this modern age

is a real and actual polygamist. Mohammedanism is a religion in which polygamy has always played a principal part, not merely in this world, but in the ravishing Houri-filled Paradise to which all faithful followers of the Prophet are sure to go.

Polygamy [we are told by F. H. Norton of the American Bureau of Literary References] seems not to have been entirely eradicated among the Christians of the sixth century, as we find it then enacted in the canons of one of their councils that if any-one is married to many wives he shall do penance. Even the clergy themselves in this period practised bigamy, as we find it ordained at another council, held at Narbonne, that such clergymen as were bigamists should only be presbyters and deacons, and should not be allowed to marry and consecrate. In the eighth century Charlemagne had two wives. Sigebert and Chilperic had also a plurality, according to Gregory of Tours. But we even find an instance of bigamy and polygamy as late as the sixteenth century. Philip, a German prince of Hesse Cassel, obtained permission from Luther and a synod of six of the Reformers, to marry a second wife during the life of the first one, and he accordingly did so.

John of Leyden, the leader of the Anabaptists at Munster in Germany in 1533, also announced his right to marry as many wives as he wished,

like the kings of Israel. He married seventeen. And no one can say that most of the kings in Europe were anything but polygamists, in spite of their devotion to the Christian religion.

Polygamy was, of course, practised by many savage races, and they had not the excuse of a divinely appointed religion. In America the ancient races were almost all polygamists. It is said that Montezuma, at the time of the Spanish invasion, had three thousand women, but this may be a religious invention designed to discredit the unlucky Mexican Emperor. It is also maintained that the Incas married only their own sisters, but were allowed to have concubines; while the Peruvians, who at first had no marriage relation, had their women in common. Later they became polygamists. So were the Brazilians in ancient times—and it is claimed that they are to this day, even if not openly. In fact, however unpleasant the truth may be, something like four-fifths of the human race practised polygamy, and “its eradication,” says Dr. E. B. Foote, “is no small part of ‘the white man’s burden.’”

The classic example of the mixture of religion with polygamy is furnished by the “prophet” Joseph Smith. Having “found” the *Book of Mormon*—by some called the *Golden Bible* because it was said to have been originally written on golden plates—Smith started vigorously to propagate his views, which were merely a variation of Christianity. He converted Brigham Young and several hundred other people, and, though driven from

post to post, still contrived to build a costly temple at Nauvoo, Ill., and even a large city. In 1838 Smith managed to persuade several women to live with him as his "spiritual" wives—an act which created such a disturbance, not merely with his own legal wife, but among the legal wives of his "elders," that Smith found it expedient to be the recipient of another "revelation," this time in favour of polygamy, in 1843. This new revelation was by no means carried unanimously, the final result leading to the death of the prophet at the hands of a cowardly mob. Brigham Young succeeded Smith and, settling finally at Salt Lake, Utah, managed to found a very prosperous city in which polygamy flourished until swept away this century by the United States Government.

Marriage—even plural marriage—was put by Young in the very forefront of man's duties on earth. To evade it was to evade the most sacred of man's obligations.

An unwedded man [says Hepworth Dixon] in Mormon belief is an imperfect creature, like a bird without wings or a body without soul. Nature is dual; to complete his organization a man must marry. . . . Instead of denying to their popes and priests the consolation of woman's love, they encourage them to indulge in a plurality of wives; and among the higher clergy—the prophet, the apostles, and the bishops—this indulgence is next to universal. Not to be a pluralist is not

to be a good Mormon. They may also secure not only wives for earth but those for heaven . . . the man may take the woman as his wife either for this world only as we all do in the Christian Church or for this world during life and the next world after death. Thus the earth wife of one man may be the spiritual wife of another. The right of choosing a celestial partner is not confined to the men, however, for among these saints the female enjoys nearly the same power of selecting her celestial bridegroom as the male enjoys of selecting his mortal bride. . . . In the Mormon Church polygamy is not a right of man but a gift of God.

Yet the United States Government, composed of quite prosaic individuals, actually declared this gift of God illegal ! It may not be out of place, however, to point out that the women of Utah were by no means unhappy, nor did they consider themselves unfortunate, under polygamy. On the contrary, marriage there was a great success. The women could vote ; they had equal opportunities with men in the making of laws ; they held office—in fact, they were actually far freer in Salt Lake City under polygamy than were their sisters in the other States of America under monogamy. There was less drunkenness, or none at all, less poverty and misery in Utah, at the height of the power of Brigham Young than anywhere else in the United States ; and there was no prostitution. Prostitu-

tion was during the greater part of the nineteenth century, both in England and America, a "stew of horrors." Whatever charge may be brought against the Mormons and the "dictatorship" of Young, at least it must be admitted that the social conditions under which the people lived in Utah were a model for other communities.

Monogamic marriage, however, seems to have been the ideal of most nations which claimed to be civilized; and the marriage of one man to one woman was considered as a "sacrament" by Christianity, however much it was abused by individuals. Perhaps the real reason for adopting monogamy was the economic one—the difficulty of providing for more than one woman and her children; and another reason may have been that women were scarce. At all events, it was the Roman conception of marriage which was finally adopted by most of Europe under Christianity. As Paul Gide says :—

Never did the Christian legislators better define marriage than did the lawgivers of ancient Rome. It is the union of two lives, the joining of two patrimonies, the putting in common of all temporal and religious interests. This was in the first four centuries of Rome. In this ancient notion of marriage already appear the two principles which are the foundation of modern Christian marriages—the indissolubility of the marriage tie and monogamy.

The passing of years, the conquests of Rome, the influx of many nationalities with their various customs, the absorption of Greece by the Roman republic, all contributed to radical changes in both morals and marriage.

During the reign of Augustus and Tiberius [says Dr. E. B. Foote] the atmosphere was foggy with laws respecting women, marriage, and divorce, and at the same time never in the whole history of Rome had there been so much matrimonial infidelity and sexual promiscuity. . . . It was during the reign of these two emperors that Rome sought rigorously to maintain, by *law*, the exemplary matrimonial life which had in the early days of the republic been sustained without law.

Among the ancient northern nations monogamy was perhaps the rule. For example, woman in old Germany—that is, about the time of Julius Cæsar—was by no means considered the inferior being which Christianity for centuries taught through the mouthpiece of Paul and the early Fathers. She was admitted to the councils of father, husband, and brother, and accompanied them to battle, inspiring them with her presence. In marriage monogamy was the rule; in fact, the ancient Germans looked upon a second marriage as a kind of polygamy.

The social status of women in ancient Scandinavia seems to have been far higher than that prevailing among Christians for centuries. Mono-

gamy again was the rule, and the betrothals preceding marriage were of a fine and solemn character. It is particularly interesting to note that the Scandinavians resisted Christianity almost up to the Reformation; they regarded with horror the religious wars and sexual customs of the rest of Europe. Dr. E. B. Foote points out that "the position of the Scandinavian women was rather lowered than bettered by the influx of the new civilization." And it should never be forgotten that, while the old pagans saw in marriage (any kind of marriage) an honourable union of the sexes, it was Christianity which glorified celibacy, and only reluctantly advised marriage for those who cannot "contain." No one can read the Epistles of Paul without seeing that what he taught was rigorous celibacy; and in this he was followed by most of the Church Fathers. The Church which still boasts that it made marriage a sacrament made a saint of Jerome, who said: "Let us put the hand to the axe, and cut by its roots the sterile tree of marriage. God had well permitted marriage at the commencement of the world, but Jesus Christ and Mary have consecrated virginity." The early Church Fathers filled their writings with denunciations of women as temptresses, in language which can hardly be copied these days, and nearly all agreed that, if man had not "fallen" as described in Genesis, God would have found another way for the perpetuation of human kind. The actual truth is, of course, that these early Christians and their followers were

prurient-minded and suffered from what psychoanalysts now call inhibitions, due to their suppression of natural instincts. That they did not always suppress the sexual instinct is proven by the fact that concubinage among priests was the rule, and not the exception, for many centuries, as has already been shown; and even those priests who thundered their denunciations at brethren who could not resist the temptations of the flesh were by no means the most rigid celibates, most of them having their own secret "affairs."

During those centuries known as the Dark Ages, all over Europe and Asia almost every form of intercourse among the sexes must have been tried. Religion was quite helpless in suppressing sex in any way, and could only regulate in some small measure the conduct of men and women. Here is one of many edicts promulgated by those in authority—one of Charlemagne's, and well worth preserving:—

We have been informed, to our great horror, that many monks are addicted to debauchery and all sorts of vile abominations, even to unnatural sins. We forbid all such practices in the most solemn manner; and hereby make known that all monks who indulge in the gratifications of such lusts will be punished by us so severely that no Christian will ever care to commit such excesses again. We command our monks to cease swarming about the country, and we forbid our nuns to prac-

tise fornication and intoxication. We shall not allow them any longer to be whores, thieves, murderers, etc.; to spend their time in singing improper songs. Priests are herewith forbidden to haunt the taverns and market-places for the purpose of seducing mothers and daughters, etc.

All these excesses naturally led to the very opposite—the very worst kind of asceticism, so fully described by Lecky in his *History of European Morals*. The ascetics did their utmost to attract men to a life of complete virginity; and, to show how they themselves could resist the temptations of the flesh, they resorted to all kinds of curious practices. Here is an example related by St. Jerome: A young Christian king during the Diocletian persecution allowed himself to be bound with silken cords in the midst of a lovely garden while a beautiful courtesan assailed him with her blandishments. Whereupon he protected himself by biting out his tongue and spitting it into her face.

The extreme to which the ascetic feeling was carried [says Lecky] is shown by the famous vision of Albaric in the twelfth century, in which a special place of torture, consisting of a lake of mingled lead, pitch, and resin, is represented as existing in hell, for the punishment of married people who had lain together during the church festivities of fast days.

It seems incredible that intelligent people could ever have resorted to the various devices recorded by Lecky to show how in the name of Christianity they could resist temptation; but all over the world, in every age, and in every clime, men and women have inflicted the most painful as well as the most stupid tortures on themselves to prove their adherence to some kind of religion, or to some kind of custom, mostly in the hope of placating some kind of deity. The great advance made by civilization since the sixteenth century altered the aspect of both sex and religion in many ways; but, for some reason, men and women can always be found with the most extraordinary ideas on both subjects—ideas which show how strongly intermingled are religious and sexual customs.

Take as an example the *Oncida* Community. The members of this Christian sect called themselves Christian Communists in the sense in which the term is used in the New Testament; and, to use their own words, they

believed with Christ that marriage ownership would be abolished when the will of God is done on earth as it is in heaven; with Paul that the marriage spirit is the greatest of all distractions and diversions from Christ; with Socrates that the improvement of the human race requires scientific attention to breeding the same as in the case of other animals; and they claimed to have discovered a new physiologico-moral principle, which they call

male continence, by means of which the new state of society demanded by Christ, Paul, and Socrates becomes practicable.

Male continence is carefully described by J. H. Noyes, the founder of the Oneida Community, in his work dealing with the sect, and also by Dr. Alice B. Stockham in her book *Karezza*. "It means," says Dr. E. B. Foote, "the control and prevention of the sexual orgasm on the part of the male in the act of cohabitation. . . . No child was permitted to be conceived unless both parties to the act were sound, mentally and physically, and properly adapted." There was no marriage in the current sense of the term, but neither was it free love. Men and women had children when these were wanted; for the rest, they did their best to enjoy sexual love, using, as a preventive measure, male continence. The members of the community summarized their position thus: "Man offers woman love and support (unconditional). Woman, enjoying freedom, self-respect, health, personal and mental competency, gives herself to man in the boundless sincerity of an unselfish union."

For some years the Oneida Community enjoyed great prosperity (they had settled in Madison County, New York) under the leadership of J. H. Noyes, but the younger generation, as it grew up, did not see eye to eye with the older members. Some of them left the headquarters, and eventually, after Noyes's death in 1886, the Community gradually broke up. It was an interesting ex-

periment while it lasted, and had it continued would undoubtedly have given sociologists valuable data on a new way of managing the sexual life of men and women. But it is doubtful whether at any time it would be possible to get ordinary people to agree to sharing their women—for, when all is said and done, that was the case of the Oneida Community.

America, of course, is notorious for freak religious sects, and few of them are not associated in some way with sex. The story of Mother Ann Lee is well known. She was the founder of the sect of Shakers in America in the eighteenth century. Before she emigrated from England she had already made herself notorious for eccentric preaching; but later, when she began to see visions and to consider herself as a sort of reincarnation of Christ, she came to the conclusion that human nature was the very sink of depravity, and sexual gratification hopelessly impure and indecent. To show her own immunity from temptation, Ann Lee would assist at religious meetings where the men worshippers would appear absolutely nude; and, like our modern nudists, she taught that men and women should bathe together without costumes of any sort.

This penchant for nudity, or for sex in some shape or form, permeates religion and proves conclusively how intimately connected are sex and religion; it proves also how near the truth were the old phallic worshippers. The moralist may thunder his denunciations at the pleasures of sex,

he may appeal to the grace of God and the wonderful laws of the Almighty, and may threaten all the terrors of Hell on those who transgress those laws; but on this question of sex the people go imperturbably forward, blind to all threat of punishment. Nature has implanted the sexual urge in all living beings; in man with a cunning and a force that will break all bounds unless satisfied; the history of marriage, the history of religion, the history of man's social activities—in fact, all man's history—points to the enormous part which this sexual urge has played. Without the fullest recognition of this fact history has no meaning.

CHAPTER X

SEX-SYMBOLISM IN RELIGION

ALTHOUGH the question of symbols in religion has been referred to on a previous page, the subject is such a vast one that a more detailed exposition will be found instructive from the point of view of phallic worship. Almost all the early protagonists of religions used symbols both to teach and preserve their ideas. The symbols constituted some of the first pictorial representations understood alike by people and priest, and in some cases did more than anything else to perpetuate religious ideas. Both the Chinese and the Egyptians used pictorial symbols from the earliest times. Some of these were simplified and became, in the course of time, alphabets, or at least were used to indicate general ideas; others developed more and more pictorially and helped to form graphic art. Still others developed into idols among Christians and pagans, though both protest that, if divine honours are often paid to their carved statues or totems or representations of deities, the worship is given to the real God of whom these are only symbols.

A symbol is, of course, a pictorial representation of an idea or it is a verbal expression of something which only those "in the know," or initiates, can fully understand. The symbolic

language of ancient art and religion is now hardly understood—indeed, some of the interpretations given by certain modern scholars are derided by others. It is possible to exaggerate the hidden meanings, or to make more of them than was ever thought of by their inventors. Extravagances which seem to be patently absurd are read into symbols. Yet the very essence of many religions and religious ideas is absurd in itself if taken literally; only by accepting the doctrine of hidden meanings can sense be made out of many religious teachings.

One of the very earliest symbols of which we have knowledge is the *circle*. It may have been one of the first representations of the sun, or it may be actually the primitive sign of the yoni. At all events, many of the earliest temples were laid out in the form of a circle, and behind the designers' idea may have been the fact that it represented one or the other. The circle is *boundless*; it encompasses the all in all; it can denote the beginning and the end, the first and the last. It became the emblem of the mother, of woman. It is used to denote the shape of the planets and of Mother Earth herself.

Plato [says the Rev. J. P. Lundy], who had studied in Egypt, tells us in the *Timæus* that God, the Maker of the Universe, fashioned it of a spherical shape, in which all the radii are equally distant from the centre to the circumference, as this is the most perfect of all figures and the most like himself. He

placed soul within the centre of the world, and extended it throughout the whole; put soul around it, and caused circle to revolve within circle, and able to converse within itself, wanting nothing; and so he made the universe a blessed god. He caused it to move with circular motion.

Whether those who made the circle a symbol knew of the rotundity of the earth and the planets is perhaps difficult to say; but they could see that the sun was round—the sun which was the source of life and fertility, a symbol in the skies of the sex of woman. It would be possible to detail more fully the speculations of occultists and initiates on the significance of the circle in life—and death, for that matter—but modern science has reduced most of these speculations to the level of primitive superstitions. What possible meaning can such a sentence as “The Circle represents Kosmos in Eternity (before the re-awakening of still slumbering energy), the divine Unity, from which all proceeds, whither all returns” have for anyone who insists on the precise meaning of words?

The serpent swallowing his tail is a variation of the “occult” significance of the circle, which again has been symbolized as “the Mundane Egg,” the egg being clearly a phallic symbol denoting fertility in the most palpable sense. As a symbol this “Mundane Egg” was used by most nations of antiquity and formed part of the Dionysiac and other Mysteries. It is still used by Jews as part of

their Passover Service, and by Christians as the Easter egg, as has already been pointed out.

The straight line, represented by the letter I, or the figure 1, is sometimes considered to be the male symbol, and here again all sorts of significations have been attached to it, some of which have already been dealt with. In any case, with a bar across, it becomes the cross, one of the most famous of all symbols; and when attached to the circle depicts the "Bar of Isis" or the union of the sexes. Here again one must walk warily, as there is quite a difference of opinion as to the precise meaning the Egyptians attached to this symbol found all over their country. It is known as the Tau-Cross, or the Ankh, or the Handled Cross, and was certainly considered sacred in Egypt. Gerald Massey says :—

It was carried in the hands of the gods, the Pharaohs and the mummied dead, the *Ankh*, the sign of life, the living, an oath, the covenant. . . : The top of this is the hieroglyphic Ru, T set upright on the Tau-Cross. The Ru is the gate, the door, the mouth, the place of outlet. This denotes the birthplace in the northern quarter of the heavens from which the sun is reborn. Hence the Ru of the Ankh sign is the feminine type of the birthplace in the north. The first sign of the primordial cycle made in heaven is the earliest shape of the Ankh cross, a mere loop, containing the circle and cross in one image.

This represents the circle made in the northern heaven by the Great Bear, which constituted the earliest year of time. The Ankh was the sign of all beginning (*Arche*) on this account, and the Ankh tie is the cross of the North.

But there are other explanations. Siva, for example, holds in his hand a cord which makes a loop over his first finger, two ends hanging down under the finger, the whole unmistakably the Ankh. Here it undoubtedly symbolizes both the lingam and the yoni, though perhaps not in the grossest sense. Frances Swiney in her little book, *The Mystery of the Circle and the Cross*, calls the Ankh the Bar of Isis, the bar signifying "the immutable law of the mother." "The bar falls," she says, "upon the opening to the gravid womb, when once conception has taken place, and in peace and security the mother develops the growing fruit of her body. No plant, no animal, admits of a second fertilization. Automatically the flower closes over the pollen; absolute is the refusal of every female animal to accept male advances when the time is unfit." But other authorities by no means accept all the symbolism which many writers, particularly occultists, see in the famous Ankh.

Connected with the worship of Isis is a sort of musical instrument called the Sistrum. It is made in the form of a loop with a handle attached and bars across. Miss Swiney calls it the emblem of Fertility, or the "Times of the Mother," as it

denotes in some way the nine months of gestation, as well as the "symbol of the male's self-sacrifice," the bars showing that the female must, "during the creative period, be kept inviolate and sacred from all intrusion."

The Egyptians, curiously enough, are said to have considered the number 10 the perfect number. As written, it shows the male symbol side by side with the female one, and in Hebrew is the numerical signification of the letter *Yod* (*IOd*), the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet, from the shape of which all the other letters are considered by Kabbalists to be derived. The *Yod* is the Hebrew number of perfection, and it also signifies the Supernal Mother described in the Kabbalistic *Sepher Yetzirah* as "the pure unity enthroned in her strength in the Word of renewal, and in the Word of Might"—whatever this means.

The 1 is combined with the circle by being placed inside the latter, and as such symbolizes many other things. Humanity is now divided into two—from which fact proceeds all evil, as readers of Genesis are aware. By crossing the line with another we get a cross within the circle, a symbol which seems to have given modern occultists a tremendous amount of study in trying to find out its significations. The cross as a symbol is one of the oldest known to humanity and has been found existing in all ages and in all countries. It was only natural that it should have been appropriated by Christianity (a religion which has assimilated so much of other religions) and made into a sort

of fetish which Christians believe now to be the supreme symbol associated only with their own deity Jesus. The cross in the circle signifies—to some people—"the Cross of Glory, the Cross of Perfection, the Cross of Proportion, Balance, Measure, and Number, that represents the creative principle of the Cosmos and produces Harmony, Unity, Wholeness, and Beauty." It also signifies "the Pleroma, the Fullness, the Highest Divine Mystery, the Kingdom of God, the Illimitable Whole, Uncreate and Created, Invisible and Visible, the Universe Perfected." From the phallic point of view it also means "the full development of the male to the standard of the female." The reader may take his choice among these interpretations—if he understands them.

How the cross originated is still a question for discussion, but a stick pushed through a ring and looked at sideways gives a perfect representation of a cross. When a man puts the wedding-ring on his bride's finger he can be said to imitate the circle and stick and—roughly speaking—the act of sexual intercourse. It is curious to note that, according to Wall's *Sex Worship*, there is a fresco in S. Marco in Florence by Fra Angelico which shows Jesus carrying a stick with a ring. Most of these old masters seem to have been fully aware of many phallic symbols, for they constantly introduced them into their pictures. Some of the paintings of Mary Magdalene show a cave somewhere—and a *cave* is certainly a female symbol. So is the crescent moon—that is, Isis. Murillo

has actually introduced this symbol in his great picture of the Immaculate Conception, Mary standing on a crescent moon. The connection with Isis must be apparent even to the most devout mind.

Diana was [says R. Payne Knight] originally and properly the Moon, by means of which the Sun was supposed to impregnate the air, and scatter the principles of generation both active and passive over the earth: whence like Bacchus and Apollo she was both male and female, both heat and humidity. She was called the Mother of the World, and the Daughter, as well as the Sister of the Sun; because the productive powers with which she impregnated the former, together with the light by which she was illumined, were supposed to be derived from the latter. . . . As the heat of the Sun animated the seminal particles of terrestrial matter, so was the humidity of the moon supposed to nourish and mature them. . . . The Greeks attributed to her the powers of destruction [compare Siva] as well as nutrition. . . . The Ilithyiae supposed to preside over child-birth . . . seemed to facilitate delivery by slackening the powers of resistance and destruction; and hence the crescent was universally worn as an amulet by women, as it still continues to be in the southern part of Italy; and Juno Lucina, and Diana, were the same goddess, equally personifications of the Moon.

The cat was worshipped in ancient Egypt, but only as the symbol of the moon. The moon could, like the cat, see at night, and the cat was also a fruitful animal—two reasons which influenced the Egyptians in their worship; for they certainly looked upon the moon as a sort of “general female personification of the Divine nature,” as Payne Knight says. He adds that “Diana was always clothed, as she had the attribute of perpetual virginity,” and, as she had many titles, “she was represented under an infinity of forms, and with an infinite variety of symbols . . . sometimes with phallic radii enveloping a female form, to show the universal generative attribute both active and passive.”

Even from this short account of the symbolism of the moon can be seen the way in which the vagaries and fancies of the primitive mind wandered searching for reasons to explain the wonderful natural phenomena which surrounded people and which had to have some explanation. The moon, indeed, seems to have been the cause of a whole host of myths intensely interesting to unravel. She was not merely the Queen of Night, but she was also a King—King Soma. According to Origen she was the symbol of Jehovah and the giver of life and death in our world. As Luna she presided over child-birth; as Hecate, over death; and in this, as Diana-Hecate-Luna, she becomes a Trinity, a three-in-one deity. It is quite possible that the number 7 became a sacred number because of its connection with the 28 days of the lunar month;

28 can be divided and so can 14, but 7 is indivisible. Moreover, 28 days is the female periodicity. The quickening of the foetus is marked by a period of 126 days—that is, 7×18 —the period of “viability” is 210 days, or 30×7 ; parturition is accomplished in 280 days, or 7×40 . Lunar calculation seems to have been almost universal at one time—even at this day the Jewish calendar is based on the lunar year.

The date upon which our own Easter falls is also calculated by the moon. “It was made a rule of the Church,” says Dean Hook in his *Church Dictionary*, “that the full moon next to the vernal (or spring) equinox should be taken for the full moon in the month *Nisan*, and the 21st of March be accounted the vernal equinox. Easter Sunday, therefore, is always the Sunday following the full moon which falls on, or next after, the 21st of March. Easter is thus observed with reference to the feast of the passover.”

Isis is almost always considered a moon-queen; but she was the “mother” of Osiris as well as his wife, and the mother of Horus. Something of the same kind of confused symbolism is seen in the description of the “virgin” Mary, the Mother of God, as well as the “wife” of Jehovah, the Father of Jesus, who is also his own father in the flesh of man. There is also some confused symbolism in the words so similar to Mary—Maia, Maya, Maria, Mariam, Miriam, Maya Durga, the mothers of other virgin-born gods. And there can be little doubt that some of the other female fertility goddesses,

such as Astarte, Astoreth, Venus, are merely variations of the Moon, the Queen of Night or Heaven, an appellation given also to Isis and the Virgin Mary. As Gerald Massey says: "All such symbols figured their own facts from the first. There was neither forgery nor interpolation of types; nothing but a continuity of imagery with a perversion of its meaning."

It is not without interest to find that some authorities are inclined to see in the word Sarah similar significations. It means Princess Lady, or the Princess of Heaven, the Moon, the Queen who rules over the night-sky. The Jews certainly worshipped the Queen of Heaven, as Jeremiah indicates (vii. 18, xlv. 16-19). And there is evident symbolism and mythology in such words as Rachael and Leah, as Goldziher points out in his valuable work, *Mythology Among the Hebrews*.

Most of the female deities were undoubtedly connected in some way with fertility, and the meaning behind the legends connected with them can almost always be seen to refer to the female power in Nature. The staff and the ring, the rod and almond, the Tau, the Ankh, are all phallic; and they are found together because the ancients recognized the twofold principle in Nature, the impossibility of reproduction without the male and the female. The earth is "mother earth," and the sun's rays, together with the rain, are always male. Of the many explanations of the Trinity, the only one which has the semblance of common sense is the phallic one—the Two (male

and female) who, by union, become One and bring forth a third person or Life, and who are thus all united in that one word—Life. And it cannot be denied that one of the first conceptions of deity apart from idols—Elohim or the God of Genesis—shows the deity as double-sexed: “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him: male and female created he them.” The Christian Trinity as formulated by the Creeds is, of course, sheer nonsense. The Hebrew word used to designate God has been the subject of many volumes, and the question is by no means closed. “Elohim” is a plural word, and this has given rise to long discussions. Godfrey Higgins says that the real reason is that the word designates two deities—male and female—and this sufficiently explains its plurality. The later Jews, who made a great feature of their God being one God, indignantly denied that he was anything but single, and masculine at that; but the very word belies their indignation. The description of God throughout the Bible is quite Trinitarian; that is, he is the Creator, the Preserver, and the Destroyer—but one could go on in this way interminably.

The word OM has already been referred to, but it could provide an interesting treatise in itself. That it has some analogies with Jupiter Ammon is the opinion of Godfrey Higgins, who devotes a long chapter to its discussion in connection with the gods of India and Persia, as well as to its use—or to the use of a similar word—by the Jews in

Hebrew. He is of opinion that "the radical meaning of this word is cycle or circle," and the Greeks translated it by the word *sol*, making it the emblem of the procreative power of Nature. *On* or *Aun* was, according to one authority, the Egyptian title of the sun, and the city of *On* was called by the Greeks *Heliopolis*. The same authority thinks that the setting up of the calves by Jeroboam (1 Kings, xii. 28) was really the worship of *On* (whom he identifies with *Osiris*), the calves being venerated as the representatives of *Apis* and *Nevis*; or, in other words, "emblematical of the sun in his male and female character—*Baal* and *Baaltis*."

The word *Em* in Hebrew (cp. Arabic, *Umm*, Assyrian *Ummi*) means mother (as has been already pointed out) and love, and might denote the maternal generative power, *Urania* of Persia, or *Venus Aphrodite* of Crete and Greece, or *Maia* of India; and some writers consider that this word or a similar one persists in the sacred books of other religions as well as in the Bible, always with a distinctive signification of fertility. For example, it is used by the Greeks in such a word as *Omphale*, the wife of *Hercules*, who is shown wearing the lion's skin and holding his "club"—a point already dealt with.

In India, besides *Maia*, there is a goddess called *Oma-Oma*—the Universal Mother (or one of them, as there seems to be quite a number), who is supposed to be greater than all the gods, as she came into existence before them; the name forms another

example of the persistence of the sacred word *Om*. Somehow or other sacred words form part and parcel of religion; and whether it is *Om*, or the sacred four-lettered name given to Jehovah which no Jew is allowed to pronounce (he is obliged to substitute the word *Adonai*, which is suspiciously like *Adonis*), or any of the other names of gods which are held to be sacred, it is extraordinary how afraid the pious believer is to enunciate these holy words when told by the priest in charge they must not be pronounced. One of the names of Bona Dea is *Oma*, which means "Mother." *Oma* is the wife of *Faunus* or *Pan*. And it is curious that, if only we go back far enough, we shall find how the "mother" or the "universal-mother" idea pervades almost all mythology; and that nothing seems to get rid of the fertility motive. It may be hidden, or it may be gross; the representation may be so delicately concealed as not to offend the most innocent; or it may be so blatantly exposed as to shock even the most hardened; but it is there.

The crescent moon is, as has been shown, one of the symbols of these goddesses, and therefore of female fecundity. It is the symbol of *Juno* as well as of the *Virgin Mary*; and it also symbolizes the *yonis* of the *Hindus*. It is used on *Mahommedan* flags, the *Crusades* forming an example of the struggle between the Cross and the Crescent, between the masculine Cross and the female Crescent. It is significant, however, to see how the goddess motive finally conquered the *Roman Catholic Church*, while the *Mahommedan religion*

remains intensely masculine. But the crescent-moon symbol eventually became a *boat* or an *ark*. It is found on Pagan monuments accompanied by a dove with an olive-branch in its beak; and it is also used on quite a number of Christian monuments. One of the symbols of Isis was a crescent boat or ark called Baris, and it was in this that Osiris was preserved from Typho. And there can be little doubt that behind the story of the Argonautic expedition with its ship Argo may be the same symbolism which is behind the stories of the arks in the Bible. Forlong, in his *Rivers of Life*, says that "the Jews had a phallus or a phallic symbol in their 'Ark of the Testimony' or Ark of Eduth, a word which I hold tries to veil the real object." He considered that—whatever it was—it was the real God of the Jews; in this he is supported by Edward Sellon (who in his day had a great reputation as an authority on phallicism). Sellon argues that "there would now appear good ground for believing that the Ark of the Covenant, held so sacred by the Jews, contained nothing more or less than a phallus, the Ark being a type of the argha or yoni (linga worship) of India." Hannay concurs, and insists that "Iove (Jahveh or Jehovah) and Testimony or *Eduth* are the same thing." The word *Eduth*, though singular, might refer to the two stones given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai. These with the Rod of Moses are put into the Ark, which, says Hannay, "symbolize the 'incomprehensible mystery' of the prayer book, the Three in One, the bi-sexual combination

of the reproductive organs in the creative act on which all life depends, the Trinity in Unity, Unity being the Ark."

There is no doubt whatever that the Jewish sacred Ark contained a table of stone, and most authorities are almost certain that this stone was phallic. Moreover, sacred stones are constantly referred to in the Bible narratives. As already mentioned, Jacob took a famous one for his pillow and afterwards consecrated it by pouring oil upon it. They were called in his day "Bethels,"—that is, "Houses of El," El being, of course, the early Semetic name for God. (El was the God of the ancient Palestinians. See the remarkable details by Jacks and Gaster in their account of the Ras Shamra tablets discovered in 1929.)

There is the story of the twelve stones which were taken out of Jordan to commemorate the passage of tribes, and it was to the stone-circle of Gilgal that Samuel asked Saul to go "to offer burnt offerings and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace-offerings." Grant Allen in his *Evolution of the Idea of God* points out that "Jahweh was an object of portable size . . . for he was carried to Shiloh in his ark to the front during the great battle with the Philistines at Ebenezer; and the Philistines were afraid, for they said, 'A god is come into the camp.' But when the Philistines captured the ark the rival god, Dagon, fell down and broke in pieces—so Hebrew legend declared—before the face of Jahweh." This seemed to frighten the poor Philistines very much, for of course they restored

Jahweh to the Israelites, and David danced before him. Jahweh was kept by David; and later a temple was built for him and the sacred ark, which was placed in the "holy of holies."

The accounts of Jahweh given later in the Bible are the result of much editing and "spiritualizing," but there can be little doubt that in his early career he was a stone god, phallic in shape. Jacob anointing his sacred stone is exactly like the anointing of the lingam-shaped cylindrical stone with the round top which was so long worshipped in India—and is now, for that matter. A similar worship seems to have extended all over Palestine—the worship of Baal or, in the plural, Baalim; and Grant Allen claims that these stones "are generally admitted to have possessed for their worshippers a phallic significance." If it is true that the Jews also worshipped in some form a young bull—there is the famous story of the adoration of the golden calf—and a brazen serpent, authorities agree that both the bull and the serpent suggest phallic associations.

Moreover, in almost all the early accounts of the dealings with man and Jahweh that are recorded, the god is "represented as a god of increase, of generation, of populousness, of fertility." Consider the way in which Abraham is promised to be the father of a great nation, and Sarah to be "the mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her." Ishmael and Isaac are both promised abundant seed, and when the psalmist sings of Jahweh it is as a god of fertility—"He maketh the barren

woman to keep house and to be a joyful mother of children." Grant Allen observes :—

Now, elsewhere throughout the world we find in like manner a certain class of phallic gods who are specially conceived as givers of fertility, and to whom prayers and offerings are made by barren women who desire children. And the point to observe is that these gods are usually (perhaps one might even say always) embodied in stone pillars or upright monoliths. The practical great god of India—the god whom the people really worship—is Mahadeo; and Mahadeo is, as we know, a cylinder of stone, to whom the *linga puja* is performed, and to whom barren women pray for offspring. There are sacred stones in Western Europe, now crowned by a cross, at which barren women still pray to God and to the Madonna, or to some local saint, for the blessing of children. It is allowed that while the obelisk is from one point of view (in later theory) a ray of the sun, it is from another point of view (in earlier origin) a "symbol of the generative power of nature"—which is only another way of saying that it is an ancestral stone of phallic virtue. In short, without laying too much stress upon the connection, we may conclude generally that the upright pillar came early to be regarded, not merely as a memento of the dead and an abode of the ghost or in-

dwelling god, but also in some mysterious and esoteric way as a representative of the male and generative principle.

Whatever was placed in the ark of the Israelites was also called the "Covenant," and the Covenant became, so to speak, the hall-mark of the Jewish race. As Genesis xvii. 10 puts it, "This is my covenant . . . ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin . . . and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant." The stone phallus in the ark was thus probably circumcised—as indeed most of the representations of the lingam seem to be. The later monotheism of the Jews is an evolved religion of the earlier grosser worship, proving that the prophets and teachers gradually became ashamed of the phallic associations of their god. Also contact with other tribes brought with it astrological and solar ideas which still persist and which can, as has been shown, be easily seen to be part and parcel of both Judaism and Christianity. It is a very great mistake to imagine that these complex religions can be explained with reference only to phallicism. Phallic worship lies at their base, but many other worships have gone to their making.

But arks, or boxes, or baskets can be found in many of the pagan religions, one of the most famous being the ark made in the form of a crescent in which the image of Osiris was concealed and brought forth with shouts of joy every year. There is also a representation of the

Bacchanalia in which are shown two wicker baskets with the lids partly open and a serpent within each of them. A nude woman is standing over one of the baskets, while a huge phallus is carried on the shoulder of one of the priests. But pagan mythology has many stories, too long to quote or explain here, of sacred arks or boxes. Suffice it to say that the ark also became a symbol of the Christian Church; and it is discussed by many of the early Fathers of the Church, as can be seen in the works of Tertullian, St. Cyprian, and St. Augustine.

Another symbol used extensively throughout religion, Pagan, Jewish, and Christian, is the serpent. It is one of the most well known of all phallic symbols—mainly because of its being able to “erect itself.” The right interpretation of the story of the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve and the Serpent must surely be a phallic one. At all events, there are quite a number of orthodox Christian commentators who are prepared to admit this. Serpent worship was very widespread—it is almost impossible to assign any limit to human credulity—and it should create no surprise to find the reptile in the Bible. He causes the fall of man in Genesis, cures serpent-bites in Numbers, and Jesus likens himself to one in John. Hezekiah, who did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, “brake into pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made [in Numbers]”—the reason being that the Israelites used to worship it. And it must not be forgotten that the whole basis of Christianity

rests upon a serpent which caused the "Fall" and necessitated a "Redemption." Without the serpent Christ would not have been wanted.

The famous phrase in Genesis used after the Fall—"It shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel"—seems to have a phallic meaning. It has been pointed out that the Bible uses many words as "euphemisms"; that is, when the original word in the Bible is too obscene to be correctly rendered, another is substituted in the translation.

According to Hannay, "head" and "heel" are euphemisms for the sexual organs, and the real curse of Eden was being smitten by the "love-disease"—syphilis; "woman was specially named as the prime agent of this curse, and her degradation is thus early begun." This interpretation is of course speculative, and may be rejected without affecting the phallic significance of the story of the Fall. Many strange Christian sects based their beliefs on serpent-worship. One of them, the Ophites, kept live serpents in their sacred chest and considered that these were the mediators between man and God. Manes in the third century taught that "Christ was an incarnation of the Great Serpent who glided over the cradle of the Virgin Mary, when she was asleep, at the age of a year and a half."

The serpent was certainly connected with pagan Saviours such as Vishnu; and Buddha was venerated under the form of a serpent. Egyptian mythology is packed with serpent worship, as even a cursory glance at the monuments and

remains of Ancient Egypt will show. Apollo was a solar serpent-god and Æsculapius was also worshipped as a serpent. But there is a whole literature on the serpent in religion and symbolism, and it is impossible to deal with such a vast subject in a few pages. Suffice it to say that for some writers the serpent symbolizes "lust," the "carnal mind," sex-desire, sex-degeneracy, and so on. The healthy and natural attraction of the sexes for each other is considered to be the working of "serpent mind" in man. So we get a Christian writer (*Sex the Key to the Bible*, by S. C. Tapp) writing this kind of thing:—

The sex brain is the source of all idolatry. In the generative organs and the lust senses of the brain are located the "other gods." The senses of the generative organs and the lust senses of the brain are the home of the pagan gods. These pagan gods are carnal ideas and lust desires which are conceived through the senses of the generative organs and the lust senses of the brain. The word "serpent" as used in Genesis, that deceived Eve, means "Babbler" or the Master of the Tongue. That is the lust thought in consciousness and the expression of this thought. This serpent is sex lust. This is the "earth" that man, made in God's image, was told to subdue and have dominion over. The serpent—that is, sex lust—was the original sin.

And so on.

If the nations of antiquity paid veneration to stones and animals and serpents it is not surprising to find that they also worshipped trees. Something has already been said on this head, but it should again be emphasized that tree-worship is mainly phallic. In the Bible we get the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil—that is, carnal knowledge—as well as the Tree of Life. But tree-worship was very widely diffused in various forms, and it is impossible to study the history of ancient religions without coming across its numerous manifestations. Frazer's *Golden Bough* is of course the classical authority—though Grant Allen thinks that Frazer did not see “the true origin of worship from funeral practices.” Be that as it may, in Biblical times we have—they have already been discussed—the sacred “groves” or *ashera*, which were built on high places on high hills and under every green tree. They were phallic, and the Jewish women wove hangings for them, from which fact may be adduced that they represented the female organs. Although it is glossed over as far as possible, there can be no doubt that—as was pointed out earlier in this work—the Jews worshipped both Baal and Ashtoreth—that is, the lingam and the yoni. This worship was vigorously attacked by the later prophets and teachers who had come to monotheism through a process of “spiritualizing,” and for this they deserve credit; but the fact still remains.

How the Hebrew writers wrote up the various “divine” stories which were told of the gods

surrounding them can be seen in the book of Esther, for example. The name Esther has obviously been derived from Istar, the Babylonian Astarte; while Mordecai is probably derived from Marduck, the god of the Babylonians. Perhaps our word Easter is also connected with this Astarte, and even our word "star" as well as the word "astronomy." Astrae was the goddess of justice, who was the last of the divinities to leave the earth at the end of the Golden Age, and she became the constellation Virgo. This is interesting in view of the fact that this worship of a goddess has persisted for so long, and even forms part of Roman Catholicism at this day. The story of Esther is read out at the Jewish feast of Purim, which used to be the occasion of much rejoicing on the part of the Jews; in fact, the feast in its early days certainly degenerated into an orgy of sexual licence. If it is a fact—on the authority of Hannay—that the letters "l" and "r" are identical in many languages—he instances our own ram and lamb—then there may be some connection between the word "Purim" and phallic. At all events, "Purim" is celebrated at the beginning of spring, when all Nature turns to "love" in some form or other, and the season is made the occasion of an uproarious festival, the modern Jew believing that it is all because Esther saved his nation from wholesale massacre at the hands of Haman.

In the famous fable associated with the name of Atlas, he is said by Homer to have charge of the

pillars which upheld the heavens, though he is generally depicted bearing on his shoulders a globe representing the Earth. As it is obvious that he himself would in this case have to stand upon something, the ancients declared that he stood upon an elephant, which in turn stood upon a *tortoise*—also a very widespread phallic symbol. Why is the tortoise phallic? In the first place, its curious-shaped head jutting in and out from under its shell; and secondly, this shell, which is more or less round-shaped. And the idea behind the fable of Atlas standing upon the tortoise is that the *world* really rests upon sex—the two sexes as symbolized by the head and the shell of the animal. Phidias fashioned one of his famous sculptures of the *fertile* Venus with a tortoise under her foot; and the animal will also be found under the feet of ancient representations of both Apollo and Mercury. Moreover, the tortoise is found as a support to many of the symbolical utensils used in religious rites. With it are frequently found the cock, the ram, and the dog. It should be pointed out, however, that very often it is difficult to account for certain symbols; they may even not be phallic at all; though, if one sees phallicism in everything remotely connected with upright or round shapes, the phallic explanation is naturally given. In the tortoise, however, the facts are there and can be seen.

There can be no doubt also that the lotus bud and stem were extensively used as phallic symbols. The plant was probably chosen because of its

fertility; it dwells in water—a female symbol; and, as Hannay points out, it keeps its seeds in its womb until they are living plants and are able to shift for themselves.

The form of the seed pod was that of a perfect cone, and the flat top contains the seeds or little plants, so that the circle or ring is woman's symbol, equally with the triangle formed by the cone seed sideways. Having adopted the lotus-seed pod, the flower, in all its glory, had to be accepted as woman at the apex of her womanhood, and hence all queens of heaven had the lotus flower as their symbol and were seated or standing on this flower. The lotus had then to be drawn into service, so it was adopted as a male symbol.

One of the Queens of Heaven in both Chinese and Japanese mythology is Kwan-yin, and pictorial representations show her seated "upon a lotus, which in turn is a symbol of the womb." Kwan-yin means the "yoni of yonis," and the goddess is sometimes represented as a fish "holding a lingam and swimming in a phallic sea." The lotus is also found as a mystic symbol called the *modius* upon the heads of Pluto, Serapis, Venus, and Fortune or Isis. Its productive powers were considered as symbolical of the spread of life and vegetation over the earth; and it was also connected with the so-called fertility of the sun because, when the sun rose above the horizon, the flower rose above the water, and, when the sun sank below

the horizon, the flower sank beneath the water. Even the Tartars used the lotus as a phallic symbol, and the Brahmins, in their sacred writings, speak of Brahma sitting upon his lotus throne.

The Jew, shaking his palm-branch with a citron at the Feast of Tabernacles, has already been referred to; but the custom of carrying a palm is as old as the hills. The Egyptian Mercury carried one, as did his priests. It was used as a symbol of the sun and is found on the pillars of Egyptian temples; and, as Payne Knight points out, was admitted as one of the symbols used by Solomon for his temple. Palm Sunday, in commemoration of the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, is still celebrated in the Christian Church; consecrated palm-leaves are believed by the faithful to ensure fertility if burnt and the ashes sprinkled on the fields. The ashes will even protect the new crops against the malevolent forces of Nature.

“In the town of Qua,” says Frazer, “near old Calabar, there used to grow a palm-tree which ensured conception to any barren woman who ate a nut from its branches.” And it should again be noted that the Maypole, so popular in England, has long been recognized as phallic in origin. Even Frazer admits that it is supposed to confer fertility upon both women and cattle. In fact most trees have been endowed by various peoples with the power of conferring fertility—owing, as Frazer shows, to the belief that a tree-spirit resides within them. He gives scores of examples in his classical work, *The Golden Bough*.

Rods, branches, pillars, poles, upright monuments of all kinds have already been referred to, and all seem to have had originally a phallic meaning. There can be no doubt whatever that a good many of the stone crosses dotted all over Cornwall, for example, were purely phallic. The top parts of most of them were later carved into crosses, and so given a Christian meaning; but antiquarians are almost unanimous in maintaining that the monuments are far older than Christianity. The round towers of Ireland, the origins of which do not seem to have been satisfactorily explained, are surely phallic. All over the world similar kinds of towers have been found—or, at all events, monuments of a somewhat similar shape. Altars were probably a modified form of these pillars, and it may well be that their earliest form was no different from the extant stone phalli. Hannay gives a photograph of a purely phallic pillar in Dorsetshire, where similar ones are called pyxes. Thomas Hardy has written a poem on this particular one, which he calls the “Lost Pyx.” Here we have also the way in which the sound conveyed by the letter P persists—P being an almost universal phallic letter and found not only in the words phallic and phallus, but also in our words pixie and spirit.

It should be added, however, that the phallic meaning of certain words has always been hotly contested by many religious writers, who pour scorn on the attempts to discover sex-worship in ancient names or sounds. But, though the whole

philological question is a vexed one, it seems—to the present writer at least—impossible to escape from some of the conclusions reached by Hannay, Inman, and other writers on phallicism. Certain sounds and words persist through the centuries in widely-apart countries in different languages, and anyone can prove this for himself by studying a slang dictionary—that is, of course, a *real* slang dictionary, and not one carefully compiled for use in girls' schools. The word "horn," for example, and its modern phallic meaning are historical facts which no apology can gloss away. So it may well be with other words, the phallic explanation of which may at first seem very "far-fetched." The whole question of phallicism has been so obscured and hushed-up, the facts are so difficult to find, the few books containing them so expensive to buy and more often than not issued for "private circulation" only, that at first glance many of the things discussed are dismissed with contempt as being quite impossible. This is particularly the case when phallicism is connected with the Bible. Religious people instinctively recoil from the notion that such an unclean thing as "sex" can be proved to be intimately connected in many ways with God's Holy Word. They are astonished to learn that even such words as Palestine and Philistine may hide unmistakably phallic meanings derived from the letter P. But words are by no means formed in a haphazard way; and from what has already been said it ought to be clearly seen in how many things can be found

an underlying symbolism of a purely phallic nature.

Even in the building of our churches there are undoubted symbols of pure phallicism. It is true that the artistic fancy and imagination of their architects have made many of the buildings of great beauty and, seemingly, far away from any suggestion of sex. But the spire or steeple surely is a relic of sex-worship. Dr. Lee Alexander Stone goes much further; he contends that church building is founded directly on sex-symbolism. He says :—

When one enters a church he does so through a double door (*labia majora*), then he finds himself in the vestibule (*vestibula*). To go further he must pass through another double door (*labia minora*); when he reaches the interior or auditorium (*vagina*) he sees ahead of him the altar (*womb*), and on each side of the altar may be observed doors which lead into rooms (*Fallopian tubes*), wherein the candidate for baptism comes into contact with the priest or preacher, and it is here that he receives the seed of regeneration; he comes back to the altar and is baptised (*amniotic fluid*) and leaves the church a reborn soul.

Over-elaborate as this may appear, it does not differ essentially from the old practice in many ancient and in some modern religions of devotees passing through yoni-shaped holes, or clefts in

stone slabs, for the purpose of becoming either fruitful or "born again," or becoming cleansed of their sins. And this yoni-shaped opening has been reproduced in the many elliptical-shaped windows which adorn our churches, as well as doors, recesses, and other apertures. Even famous religious paintings have not escaped this elliptic shape. Dozens of well-known paintings of the Virgin Mary and of Jesus have an ellipse around them, and in many cases a quite suggestive one. In Utrecht there is a picture of Elizabeth and Mary, painted about the year A.D. 1400, showing Jesus and John as embryos enclosed in tiny ellipses. Numerous other examples will be found in Mrs. Jameson's works, all from classical painters and old masters, proving beyond all doubt that they recognized the ellipse as the symbol of the yoni or the "door of life."

In Dumblane Abbey there is a window which was considered by Ruskin to be one of the most beautiful in England; Wall gives a reproduction of it in his *Sex-Worship*. But not many of the visitors to the Abbey who see this window will recognize its symbolism—which is quite realistic—showing a yoni and all its component parts, the labia majora, labia minora, clitoris, vestibule, and orifice. And Payne Knight in his *Worship of Priapus* gives illustrations of other phallic remains found on many Christian churches.

The fish as a phallic symbol has already been mentioned. Modern psychologists like Freud see in it a symbol of the male organ, but it—especially

the head and mouth—has also been recognized as a female symbol. At all events, statues of Isis often show the goddess with a fish on her head; it was used for Venus as a sign of fertility, and even among the Jews in Biblical times we have the word *Dagah*, which means fishing and fertility. Dagon has been identified as the Philistines' Fish God, but there is considerable doubt on this point. It is now usually identified with the word *dragon*, which means corn.

The triangle is a very old symbol. The female pubic hair forms a distinct triangle, while a triangle with the apex pointing upwards can be formed from the shape enclosing the male sex organs. Dr. Schliemann, in his work *Ilios*, describes a leaden female idol of great antiquity, the yoni marked with a *triangle*, thus showing how old must be this symbol used for the female principle. The two triangles joined together form the well-known "Shield of David" universally adopted by the Jews as their own symbol. The Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations have adopted the triangle as their symbol.

That mysterious concept of Christians, the Trinity, has never been satisfactorily explained; but perhaps the triangle has had something to do with its genesis. At all events it is a good example of the "three in one"—though whether orthodox believers would admit any connection with phallicism is another matter. But the Trinity is found in many religions. For example, the Chinese consider Nature to have two sides—Yang, the mas-

culine, and Yin, the feminine principle; from these come Life, or the third principle. The Taoists substituted Heaven for Life in their Trinity.

Other triads are heaven, earth, and water; fire, water, air; the sun, moon, Venus; and the fire, light, and air (or spirit) of the Hebrews. The modern man will talk, of course, of body, mind, and spirit (or soul); while many people have a suspicion that, however much the orthodox may talk about God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, forming the Trinity, the only real Trinity in human life and reason is that formed by man, wife, and child.

Egypt is, as would be expected, famous for its Trinities. The god Nut is heaven, Seb the earth, while Shu is the space which separates them. But the greatest is that formed by Osiris the First Cause, Isis the receptive, and Horus the result. Among the other Egyptian Trinities can be singled out the one with Horus the Water Season, Set the Drought or Destroyer, and Shu the Reconciler and Mediator. It is said that Shu was the first to lift up the heavens from the earth, and he is often shown as standing on seven steps within a triangle.

Another very ancient symbol, much in evidence these days, is the Swastika. It has been traced back many thousands of years, and has been used for centuries as an amulet or charm, not only in the Old World, but also in the New. Wall tries to show its origin in four lingams all pointing to a yoni in the centre. On the other hand, there are

many authorities who claim that it is only a symbol of sun-worship. Mr. E. Thomas, in his *Indian Swastika*, says: "As far as I have been able to trace or connect the various manifestations of this emblem, they one and all resolve themselves into the primitive conception of solar motion which was intuitively associated with the rolling or wheel-like projection of the sun, through the upper or visible arc of the heavens, as understood and accepted in the crude astronomy of the ancients." And Schliemann, the famous German scholar and excavator, says that the Swastika has been found in nearly all countries of Europe, and in many countries of Asia, on urns, paintings, and coins, going back to the most ancient times. Other authorities explain the symbol in mathematical terms, as it can be accurately constructed from a circle and square, the latter divided into sixty-four squares, and the whole constituting a valuable symbolical reference to the four seasons, twelve months, and fifty-two weeks of the year.

Whether the Swastika is one of the forms of what is perhaps the most famous symbol of all, the cross, is a matter of opinion. It is, of course, a cross, but unlike the one made famous by the Christian religion, the cross *par excellence*. To what has been already said of the cross may be added a few more facts—or theories; for it need hardly be said that authorities hotly dispute amongst themselves what is claimed to be the truth. Is the cross a phallic symbol or not? No final answer has as yet been admitted by all

authorities. But the cross was certainly used as an emblem long before Christianity, and used as such all over the world. Higgins says it was considered as emblematic of eternal life, and "from a fancied similarity to the membrum virile, to be emblematic of the procreative powers of Nature." Payne Knight thinks the cross "might properly be called the symbol of symbols."

The Egyptians used the cross on their banners, as did the ancient Persians; and though modern Judaism has always repudiated it with scorn, on account of its connection with the rival religion, some authorities claim that it was a cross that Moses set up in the wilderness—a cross made, like the Cross of Calvary, from the wood of the Tree of Life in Paradise. Of course, this cross was not exactly the shape given to it by Christians; it was what is called the *tau*, just like our letter T. In this shape it will be seen carried by Horus (who was considered by the Egyptians as a *Mediator*, and the second person of their Trinity), and has been found on other statues in Egypt. It is also found on obelisks and mummies. And the Rev. Thomas Maurice, in his *Indian Antiquities*, specially remarks, in describing an Egyptian statue, that it bears a cross in its hand—that is, "a phallus, which among the Egyptians was the symbol of fertility." Representations of both Saturn and Jupiter show these gods bearing both a cross and a ram's horn, thus proving its ancient lineage; while we know that the Druids used the cross also as one of their main symbols.

Maurice says :—

Let not the piety of the Catholic Christian be offended at the assertion that the cross was one of the most usual symbols among the hieroglyphics of Egypt and India. Equally honoured in the Gentile and the Christian world, this emblem of universal nature, of that world to whose four quarters its diverging radii pointed, decorated the hands of most of the sculptured images in the former country; and in the latter stamped its form upon the most majestic of the shrines of their deities.

Upon this passage Higgins comments, “Mr. Maurice should have said this emblem of the *prolific powers* of Nature”; and he adds that in the cave of Elephanta, in India, may be seen the Mitre, the Crozier, and the cross, together with a large lingam representing the creative power of Nature. In fact, the cross, however much it was used as a symbol of the sun or of eternal life, was also used as a symbol of the generative powers of man. This is admitted by Colenso in his monumental work on the Pentateuch, though Baring-Gould, in his *Curious Myths of the Middle Ages*, claims that “the phallic origin attributed to the cross is destitute of evidence.”

It is not the purpose of this essay to go fully into the question of the non-Christian cross; its history goes back far beyond that of Christianity, and it was venerated as a religious symbol long before it was adopted in the shape of a crucifix by

the early Christians. In this connection, however, it ought to be pointed out that even then it was unknown for some centuries after the date given to the crucifixion of Jesus. But, divested of the religious bias inculcated by Christianity against the idea that the cross could be in any way associated with sex, many authorities do not deny—indeed, they cannot—the association between the cross and Phallicism.

To revert to the Swastika again, Sir George Birdwood points out that it is found in a right-hand and in a left-hand form—the first signifying the male principle, or the Sun on its daily journey from east to west, Light and Life; and the second the female principle, the Sun in Hades or the Underworld, on its journey from west to east, Darkness and Death. They also appear to signify Fire and Water—Fire as the male principle, and Water as the female principle. Schliemann agrees with Professor Sayce that the Swastika is a symbol of generation; while J. D. Parsons, in his valuable dissertation on the *Non-Christian Cross*, says that, as it is admitted that there is a close connection between sun-worship and phallicism, it is not surprising that “the inhabitants of classic Troy, like those of the Land of the Nile and other countries, recognized a close affinity between the productive forces and the sun, and were one in accepting a cross of some description as the natural symbol whether of Life or the Giver of Life.” In other words, though orthodox authorities refuse to admit a phallic connection with the Christian

cross, crosses in general all over the world are mostly phallic symbols, and the reader can decide for himself whether the Christian cross is an exception. At all events, this meaning must be given to the Swastika, as well as to the handled cross, or *crux ansata*. How widespread was the latter can be seen from the fact that it has been found in Sardinia, Africa, Phrygia, Palestine, Mesopotamia, and India. The Phœnicians, says one authority, grafted it on to the cone representing the goddess Astarte, while the Gauls used it as the symbol of life and fecundity. Whatever, then, may be the meaning given to the cross in its various shapes and forms—and several significations are proposed by authorities—its primitive meaning is almost invariably connected with fertility; it is therefore phallic.

In discussing the worship of Priapus in a former chapter, mention was made of the statues of this god placed in gardens or on public highways. These are called Hermæ, and J. D. Parsons thinks there is a close connection between them and the cross. He points out that there was usually a “transverse rail just below the head, much used for hanging garlands upon, which made the whole look more or less like a cross.” And he adds that

it is noteworthy that some at least of the early Christians discovered in the more or less cruciform outline of the Hermæ a reason or excuse for paying them homage, while very similar figures are to be seen illustrated upon

Christian antiquities such as the mosaic of which the great cross of the Lateran forms the principal feature.

The cock as well as the cross often surmounts the steeples of our Christian churches, and it is noteworthy to remark that the cock was a symbol of the generative powers of the sun, as well as a phallic symbol; and in this connection the word is used—as is well known—to this day.

The illustrations, paintings, ornaments, etc., found in the ruins of Herculaneum and Pompeii are, as those who have seen the collection in the Secret Museum at Naples can testify, erotic—or phallic—to the highest degree. The cross and the phallus have been found together on the walls as meaning—according to C. W. King, in *Gnostics and their Remains*—the same thing. He says that “this cross seems to be the Egyptian Tau, that ancient symbol of the generative power, and therefore transferred into the Bacchic mysteries.” From all the foregoing evidence—and a great deal more could be produced—even a Christian like J. D. Parsons, in his work on *The Non-Christian Cross*, is forced to admit that “the cross was a well-known symbol of life before our era, and that as a whole the evidence tends to show that it became such as a phallic symbol, and therefore as a symbol of the sun-god.”

In passing it should be added that the cross as it is known to Christianity at this day is never found on any Christian monument of the first four

centuries. It is admitted by *Chambers's Encyclopædia* that "the so-called cross of Constantine is not really a cross but a circle containing the X P I, the first three letters of the name of Christ in Greek; and was merely an adaptation of a symbol of a Gaulish solar deity." Even as late as the sixth century there is little evidence that a crucifix was known to Christians. As a matter of fact, Farrar, in his *Christ as Represented in Art*, actually admits that one of the earliest and most frequent symbols, as well as a favourite one of Jesus, was a *fish*, and it continued to be one up to the time of Constantine. And, as has been shown, the fish is also a symbol of Venus and is thoroughly phallic.

The cross, as a religious and mystical symbol, has been traced by many writers in books full of legendary lore and speculation. Most, if not all, recognize it as one of the oldest symbols connected with religion; but, hide the fact as they may, very few of the more learned writers would be prepared to deny its connection with phallicism. It is surely significant that Christianity, which is considered by its devotees as the one revelation from God Almighty, should have for its greatest symbol a phallic one—a fact which demonstrates as much as anything can the close connection of religion and sex.

There are still quite a number of symbols which have at their base a phallic signification. Even that mystic fraternity, the Rosicrucians, who have constructed quite an elaborate system of symbols,

often admit the sex motive underlying most of them. For example, Hargreave Jennings, in his well-known work on their rites and mysteries, remarks on a curious heraldic design that above it is "a spade, signifying here a phallus; and below it is the distaff, or instrument of woman's work, meaning the answering member, the yoni." As one writer (W. F. C. Wigston in his *Bacon, Shakespeare, and the Rosicrucians*) remarks :—

The spade is a Rosicrucian emblem of the phallus. It is the instrument of sowing, or placing seed in the mother-earth, with the result of new life, rebirth. Cupid (as Love) is a seed-bearer, for he causes new life to spring out of Death. . . . His spade is the emblem of the seed-sower, and the seed is the source of the new life. . . . The original of Spade is *Spada*, a sword (and) the sword and sheath, even to the name of the latter (*Vagina*), have stood for emblems which the reader will readily guess. The spade has no sheath except it be buried in the earth, when it becomes the means of fertilization.

From all this will be seen how the language of symbolism was called in to emphasize the under-meaning of phallicism. The ark, the bull—and from the bull, the cow, the horseshoe, and the cornucopia—the circle, the cross, the dove, the egg, the fish, the lamb or ram, the lotus, the moon and sun, the serpent, the spade—all these and many

others have a phallic basis. They were used to show at a glance their connection with sex in some form, just as the signs and symbols erected on our own highways indicate necessary precautions to motorists. And this language of symbolism was transferred to the written and printed page, and can be seen and understood by those who have the rather rare qualifications to do so. In the past candidates for initiation into the religions of antiquity had to undergo special training, pass through various ordeals, learn all sorts of hidden meanings and signs, before being called to the priesthood, as it were. Freemasons, even in these more enlightened days, will readily recognize the truth of this.

The ancient religions were packed with esoteric practices, allowed only to genuine initiates and understood—or supposed to be understood—only by them. The “vulgar” had to be content with the outward resemblance; for them a circle looked like a circle and was a circle; an upright column was an upright column pure and simple; and they had to take on faith that something else was meant—as in the case of the Holy Eucharist. The wafer on the altar was made a wafer exactly like another wafer; but when the priest in charge solemnly utters certain words over it—though the ordinary person sees no change whatever—the wafer changes at once into the body of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is vouched for by the Church to which the priest belongs; though it is only fair to state that other sects of the same Church will subscribe only

to a *symbolic* change, the ceremony being just pure symbolism and nothing more.

The subject is a fascinating one, and has been dealt with in great detail in many works. To them the reader is referred if he wishes to study the question further.

CHAPTER XI

SEX-WORSHIP AND SCIENCE

THE close connection between sex and religion has been noticed by psychologists, more particularly in recent years, and many works have been published which shed a flood of light on what is known as religious ecstasy and kindred states. There can be little doubt that repressed sexual desires have a great deal to do with excessive religious devotion, and that the "mystical" marriages between male "saints" and the Virgin Mary, and female "saints" and Jesus, would rarely have taken place if these people could have led normal lives in ordinary marriage. Iwan Bloch, in his *Sexual Life of Our Times*, gives the kind of hymn "at one time very widely diffused among the feminine population of France":—

Praise to Jesus, praise His Power,
Praise His sweet allurements !
Praise to Jesus when His goodness
Reduces me to nakedness ;
Praise to Jesus when He says to me :
" My sister, My dove, My beautiful one ! "

Praise to Jesus in all my steps,
Praise to His amorous charms !
Praise to Jesus when His mouth
Touches mine in a loving kiss !

Praise to Jesus when His gentle caresses
Overwhelm me with chaste joys !
Praise to Jesus when at my leisure
He allows me to kiss Him !

It should be added that the word in the original French for "kiss" in the last line is "baiser," which is rather stronger than the word generally used—"embrasser." But the hymn is typical of the ecstatic states into which, with solitary devotion to religion, very pious men and women have allowed themselves to get; their idea being, of course, that while it is the most awful form of sin to desire intercourse outside marriage, day-dreaming oneself into a sensual state with Jesus or Mary is something quite different and quite holy.

The truth is that these kinds of "mystical" unions were very well known to the old heathen religions; pagan mythology gives innumerable examples of the way in which the gods came down from heaven to make love to women on earth; though whether the resulting progeny was really considered by mere man to be half divine is another question. Nowadays it would be very difficult for a woman to convince a prosaic family medical practitioner that, if she has a child, it had a God for its father.

The Roman Catholic Church, with a wide experience of the ways of men and women, has shown remarkable aptitude in adapting the "sacrament" of marriage to the sexual imagination of adolescents. Girls, on being confirmed, are dressed to look as much like brides as possible, and proud indeed they are of the fact. Believers are taught that Christ is the "bridegroom" of the Church and the Church is His "bride." And it is not

surprising to find that, after centuries of this sort of teaching, pious maidens and nuns love to call themselves—and indeed often actually believe that they are—the brides of Christ. Iwan Bloch is quite right when he says that “religion shares with the sexual impulse the unceasing yearning, the sentiment of everlastingness, the mystic absorption into the depths of life, the longing for the coalescence of individualities in an eternally blessed union, free from earthly fetters.” But very often this kind of feeling is not satisfied with mere yearning, and it breaks out into something far more real. Hence the many religious erotic festivals—some of which have been described in a former chapter—associated with not only primitive peoples but also highly civilized nations like the Romans. Bloch has some very illuminating remarks on the subject :—

The fact that such sexual excesses are throughout the world found in association with religion, that since the very earliest times they have been connected with the most various forms of religion, proves once more that the origin of this relationship is dependent on the very nature of religion as such, and that it is not in any way due to the individual historic character of any one belief. . . . Religio-sexual phenomena belong to the everywhere recurring elementary ideas of the human race (elementary ideas in the sense of Bastian); and the only way of regarding such

phenomena that can be considered scientifically sound is from the anthropological and ethnological standpoint.

Reference has been made in a former chapter to the way in which certain Sakti or Siva sects in India indulge in the wildest religious sexual orgies; but similar ones can be found in all parts of the world in all centuries. These demonstrations of religious fervour are not always confined to the mere adoration of the sexual organs, whether in the living person or in effigy, nor are they finally expressed in sexual intercourse. Among the Skopzi, a Russian sect, the belief is (or was) entertained that salvation through Jesus Christ, the Son of God, could be obtained only by castration as indicated in Matthew (xix. 12). The example of Origen, the famous Christian Father, was a shining one for the leaders of the Skopzi, and self-mutilation was gloried in by the converted. It was necessary to convert 144,000 to bring about the millennium, and desperate attempts were made to do so; but not all the faithful could, so to speak, go the whole hog. The women of the community also did their best to slay for ever their sexual desires; but here again many were quite unable to do so. The result was wholesale erotic orgies in which the preliminary dancing and whirling and scenes not unlike those which often take place at our own religious revivals were followed by unbridled intercourse. Even the amputation of the breast of young virgins was considered to be

favourable in the sight of the Lord; but their subsequent impregnation by the fervidly pious was perhaps supposed to be still more so. Russia has produced many other remarkable sects, such as the Ticklers—so called because in their religious services the males were required to tickle the females till they swooned; the Shodkinites, who believed suicide by starvation was the way to Paradise; and many others with similar weird ideas, all, or most of them, dominated by some sexual vagary or superstition.

Among savage races in particular will be found all sorts of religious customs and taboos in which sex in some form or other plays the predominating part. Statues in which the sex-organs are greatly exaggerated are placed in some prominent part of a village, and even pairs of figures engaged in the conjugal act. This is the case in many islands of the Indian Archipelago; and throughout part of the coast of West Africa there is a divinity called Legba or Elegba, who is worshipped almost entirely from the sexual point of view. Many of the tribes in these districts adore a male god whose image is always endowed with a very disproportionate lingam.

On the Congo, as recorded by Sir H. H. Johnston, are little rustic temples within which are male and female figures with exaggerated sex organs; and phalli often dangle from the roofs. The natives do not look upon these things as obscene, but as a sort of solemn mystery; and Sir H. H. Johnston remarks that, where on the coast the morals and

manners of the natives are particularly corrupt, phallic worship is not found. In the Malay Archipelago there is a god called Karaenglowe, who combines in himself both the lingam and yoni. He is a favourite with worshippers, and his powers are supposed to be very extensive, as are those of a similar god called Butu-Ulishwa, whose worship the Dutch Government has vainly tried to suppress.

Though it may be true that in some parts of the Congo basin the natives see nothing obscene in the display of phalli, this is by no means the case in Dahomey—famous once for its ferocious women warriors. Here every street used to be, and probably now is, adorned with phallic objects set up with the express purpose of exciting sexual desire. Legba is also one of the gods worshipped as a fetish or a divinity. Dahomey used to be the scene of unparalleled horror and cruelty, the Amazons in particular distinguishing themselves in acts of foul barbarism. As a good many of these women were virgins whose virginity was jealously guarded, their conduct was in all probability the result of suppressed sex desire.

Native dances in almost all parts of the world seem to have a sex significance; and even in our own country parsons and priests have denounced ordinary dances—even those that take place in church halls—as the work of the devil—meaning, of course, that there was sex gratification in the obvious enjoyment of the dancers. Certainly some of the Hindu dances are erotic, especially those that

are enacted before specially selected Sakti and Siva worshippers.

In North America George Catlin has described for us some of the dances of the Indians. One of these, called the Buffalo dance, is particularly suggestive, as on the last day of the ceremonies there enters a horribly disguised personage with an enormous phallus which, after other incidents, is pulled off by the women present and carried in triumph through the nearest village. Similar are the Sun dance of the Arapaho and many of those practised by various tribes in Mexico and in Central America. Whatever may be the underlying idea in the mind of the people who indulge in these dances, there can be little doubt that the generation or fertility motive in some way is the basis of all these manifestations.

But it is not only in dancing that eroticism in some form breaks out; there are literally hundreds of tribal customs carefully collected by anthropologists which are obviously sexual, and which prove beyond the shadow of a doubt the tremendous influence which sex has had on the human race in all centuries and in all countries. And this must have been the case at the very dawn of history. It is perfectly understandable that early man should have pondered over the bodily sensations aroused by the sexual instinct. They have been pondered over and discussed ever since—and at no time more than the present. The advance in the science of psychology has opened out new lines of thought on the subject, and the penetrating

discoveries of psycho-analysis have revealed and exposed a wealth of new material in connection with the whole sexual question.

No longer can it be doubted that a good many of the manifestations which have hitherto been supposed part of religion, such as awe and mystery, love and ecstasy, benevolence and morality, are merely the sublimation of the old desires roused by phallic worship. And, if this be true, then, as one writer puts it, "Love and religion have been inseparably intertwined all through the history of mankind." But, while the religions of the West, or rather of Europe, have tended to despise outward manifestations of sex and to substitute the ideal of perfect chastity, the many tribal customs of more primitive peoples prove infallibly the sexual origin of at least some religious ceremonies, no matter how hotly this may be denied.

Moreover, not only was worship bestowed upon divinities with exaggerated sexual organs, not only was religious prostitution a feature of many ancient—and even some modern—religions, but one must not forget to note the fact that homosexuality also played its part in sex-worship. Sodomy is violently denounced in the Bible, but seems always to have had its adherents. A god called Chin founded homosexual worship in Yucatan; while in Tahiti there were special divinities for this kind of adoration. Needless to say, its priests dressed and adorned themselves like women. The same thing was a feature of religion in old Japan, and there are records of tribes in northern Africa where the

women worshipped their gods together in tribadistic fashion. Greek mythology is full of homosexual stories—as, for example, the history of Zeus and Ganymede.

Homosexuality has been denounced by authority, but both ancient and modern history is full of accounts of the practice. Great men and women—such as Julius Cæsar, Socrates, Frederick the Great, Michael Angelo, Sappho, among many others—have been called homosexuals, and medical records are full of authentic cases of these unfortunate people of the intermediate sex, as they have been called. It is only fair to state that they are by no means inclined to call themselves unfortunate; it is the attitude of society in general which has endeavoured to make them so. They have their apologists, who protest that society is exceeding its right in its persecution of people with sexual abnormalities; though here again it should be noted that society is far more ready to condemn any homosexual practice in men than in women—among whom in all probability it is far more widely prevalent. Be that as it may, the practice was associated with religion in the past; and that it was an exaggerated form of phallic worship there can be no doubt. But the whole question is extremely complex, as the *reason* for such a variation from normality in human beings has not yet been found. The difficulty is increased when it is seen that most homosexuals appear to be perfectly normal as far as their sex organs are concerned; only in their impulses are they different.

Many of man's earliest gods were hermaphroditic, but whether this was the cause of homosexual worship is not known. The real truth is, perhaps, that homosexual worship followed homosexual practices. At all events, religious prostitution in ancient lands certainly tolerated homosexuality; and there has been, and still is, a definite movement among modern intellectuals to reform the laws which prevail to punish people condemned for practising it. Though the question has been driven underground for centuries by public opinion and severe laws, the more enlightened sex-psychologists are examining it in the light of modern science and discovery; and, whatever the final verdict may be, there can be little question that, as Iwan Bloch asserts, "unquestionably the homosexual being has the same right to exist as the heterosexual. To doubt it would be preposterous." At the same time it should be recognized that we owe the greatest spiritual values in civilization to the heterosexual and not to the homosexual. In other words, homosexuality is at least anti-social, and of course abnormal, and therefore should be strongly discouraged.

But this question, like the whole of the sexual question, forms part of the study now being profoundly investigated by our foremost psychologists, the study of the greatest urge—next to the desire for food, of course—in mankind. The crude worship of the sexual organs by so many nations in primitive times was perhaps merely a form of this urge not properly understood, except as a

fertility motive, on the supposition that fertility was the most desirable thing in the world. Long contemplation of Nature, the sun, moon, and stars, for example, as well as the breeding times of animals and sex periodicity in the female, all led to a more intricate worship. Sun-worship became entwined with sex-worship; the moon, smaller and paler than the vigorous sun, became identified with feminine attributes and personified as a goddess. The stars formed strange figures in the heavens and were given extraordinary powers which influenced man at birth and throughout his life; the planets became gods with special prerogatives, able to come to earth, and unable to resist the love blandishments of women. Hence the number of subsidiary gods born of virgins; hence the story of Jesus Christ, whose Virgin Mother conceived through the Holy Ghost, and whose birth was announced to his mother's husband through an Angel, a Heavenly Messenger.

But, however much the sexual side of these stories became obscured in their repeated relating, the phallic meaning has never been completely lost. To the student the sex symbolism in many of the ancient religions is as clear as daylight, though clerical interests have striven hard to conceal the facts. But the fertility motive, first ascribed to the sex-organs, then to the sun, and then to a superior being residing in the heavens, the creator and producer of all, is very briefly the evolution of monotheism; and no amount of special pleading can hide the fact. Just as many people shudder

with horror when they are told that human beings are descended from an ape-like animal and that therefore man has an animal ancestor, so believers in a chaste monotheism turn away with disgust when the phallic origin of a great part of their religion is insisted upon. But the sexual question has to be faced in the light of history and evolution, and it is now being investigated far more thoroughly and scientifically than ever before. A few words on its modern aspect may form a fitting conclusion to this short history of phallicism.

A glance at the works of many of the great classical writers of Greece and Rome will show how much they were preoccupied with sex. Juvenal, Ovid, Catullus, Lucian, Aristænetus, Martial, Aristophanes, Plutarch, Horace, Petronius, Apuleius, and many others whose complete works are lost, prove to what extent men and women were interested in the subject from every point of view. The wall-paintings of Herculaneum and Pompeii, together with sculptures, engravings, bas-reliefs, and other artistic work found all over the world, prove how artists, just as much as writers, found some of their greatest inspiration in sex. Most of them delighted in the utmost realism, and it would surprise art-lovers if they knew how many of the world's greatest artists lent themselves to depicting love in its most lustful forms. Fuchs, in his histories of erotic art, has collected scores of reproductions of these paintings, drawings, and sculptures.

The Oriental nations have not been one whit

behind their Western brothers in this respect. Some of the most famous manuals of erotology have come from the East. The *Kama Sutra*, the *Kama Shashtra*, the *Perfumed Garden*, the *Ananga Ranga* all deal with sex in its most intimate aspects. The complete edition of the *Arabian Nights* is full of sexual stories. It is said that the Lane translation contains only about a third of the stories, and these the least noxious. Burton and Payne in England and Mardrus in France have made unexpurgated translations of the *Arabian Nights*, to which the reader must go if he wishes to understand the extent to which the sexual question was considered in Arabia and surrounding countries. In China and Japan eroticism prevailed in both the literature and the arts. The great Japanese artist Hokusai was one of the world's greatest masters of the erotic in art, and he had many followers.

In Europe, in spite of the domination of Christianity, the sexual impulse was expressed in the art and literature of the times as well as in the daily life of the people. The pictures of contemporary life in such books as the *Decameron*, the *Heptameron*, and similar collections, together with the large number of memoirs dealing with the life at the royal courts, show to what extent every variation of sex pleasure was indulged in by the high and the low. In the work of the eighteenth-century Marquis de Sade will be found the culmination, so to speak, of the sexual question. His books are almost impossible to procure, so sav-

agely were they suppressed—as, indeed, they are now. But they are quite indispensable to the student of sex-psychology. De Sade, who was looked upon as the last word in degeneracy, whose writings were considered the foulest of all products of the human mind, can now be studied with scientific dispassionateness; but he marks a prominent milestone in the study of the sexual question.

Here and there attempts were made later to deal with the subject of sex in all its aspects by such men as Richard Payne Knight, Dulaure, George Drysdale in the *Elements of Social Science*—a remarkable pioneer work—and more recently by Garnier in France and Havelock Ellis in England. In both countries the authorities tried to muzzle the various writers on the ground of “indecentcy” or pornography; but the fight for free speech on these matters was fought; and in many cases the authorities had to admit defeat. Since the war of 1914–1918 the spate of books on sex has increased enormously; but whether they are written altogether in the interest of science, or because the demand for books on sex is great, is a matter of opinion.

Much of the credit for the more open discussion of every aspect of the sexual question must be given to the pioneer writers on the subject of birth control. The magnificent fight for freedom of speech put up by men like Richard Carlile, Francis Place, Henry Hetherington, and Charles Bradlaugh made it possible for the question to be discussed with the fullness of modern times. More

perhaps than any other pamphlet on the subject, Charles Knowlton's *Fruits of Philosophy* paved the way to the remarkable books on birth control produced by modern experts. It is only natural that the free discussion of this subject, together with Freudian psycho-analysis, has brought the whole sexual question into more open prominence. Women are no longer content to look upon themselves, or be looked upon, as mere breeders of children: they insist that they also have a sex life which should be satisfied, apart altogether from the freedom of bringing children into the world.

Not only this, but the whole question of marriage and the relation of the sexes in and out of marriage is no longer discussed surreptitiously. Men and women with the highest qualifications are writing books openly and fearlessly advocating conduct totally at variance with what has been known as the Christian code of morality. The idea that marriage is a sacrament is laughed to scorn by some of the moderns; they point out that there can be no true marriage—no matter what the Church, following Jesus, says—in cases of permanent insanity or drunkenness; or where one of the parties to the marriage is imprisoned for life, or for a long period of years; or even in cases of strong incompatibility of temperament. Hence the agitation for a reformed divorce law more in keeping with the present state of civilization.

Then there is the advocacy of trial marriages, as well as legitimate unions outside marriage for both sexes. In the case of the male, it is pointed

out that satiety is the inevitable rule of ordinary marriage, that man is by nature a polygamous animal, and if he is not allowed to satisfy his wandering desires openly he will do so clandestinely. In the case of the female, the claim is made that one man as a rule is quite unable to satisfy the sexual desires of the average healthy woman, and, therefore, if man cannot restrain himself and must have mistresses, woman should be allowed to have lovers; and if these were made "legitimate" there would follow no scandal. How far modern society as a whole is prepared to concede such violent changes in the current ethical code it is impossible to say. But the point is that these questions are discussed with every freedom, and prove the inevitability of change even in those things which for centuries were considered inviolate

A sex-psychologist like Theodore Schroeder is inclined to look upon this freedom to discuss sexual questions as almost a manifestation of phallic worship modernized. His remarks are worth reproducing :—

All those who must talk in bated breath about the sacredness of sex and love, or who must get excited about some unparsonized sexual relation even though known to have been actually harmless, have not become emancipated from the phallic worshipper's extravagant appraisal of sex, no matter what may be their avowed sexual or theological

creed. The mental and emotional tones, values, and processes which are involved in much of the present blind sentimentalism over sexual moral creeds is similar to that which, in the infancy of the race, produced phallic worship. Even now the human attitude towards sex is often so reverential as to embody all the essentials of phallic worship, except its frank avowal. In spite of the differences in theory and theology, there is evidence in all this of the same psychologic immaturity.

The net result of all this is that progress towards a rational attitude on sex questions must necessarily be slow. The sense of guilt or shame which so often accompanies even a legalized indulgence in sex is very difficult to eradicate. And it is by no means certain how to educate people—or children—in such a way that on the one hand there will be none of the tendency towards a modernized phallic worship, and on the other hand none of the harmful puritan and shameful attitude towards the sexual question which has characterized society for so many centuries. However this education is ultimately accomplished, it will be a source of congratulation for all who have at heart the interests of humanity at large. It will help the secularization of the race and the elimination of false ideas as to mysticism and religion; and it will mean also that, on the question of sex, rational and healthy ideas will take the place of phallic

worship—whether in the old way of worshipping the sexual organs as deities either in a subjective or objective way, or the glorifying of sex as the only thing that matters in modern life. Centuries may elapse before such a position is gained, but that it will be attained no one who studies the immense progress which has taken place in science and psychology in recent times can doubt for a moment.

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INDEX

A.

AB = "father," 32
 Adam, 33
 Adamites, 131
 Adonis, 14, 45, 62
 Alicarloe, 77
 Amun, 33
 Anabaptists, 131, 142
 Anaitis, 60
Ancient Faiths, 28
 Ankh, 158
 Antwerp, 103
 Aphrodite, 59
 Apis, 10, 11, 14
 Apollo, 56
Arabian Nights, viii, 210
 Argo, 169
 Ark, 23, 169, 170
 Ascetics, 150
 Asher, 33
 Asherah, 22
 Ashtoreth, 22, 33, 59
 Ass, 57, 76
 Astarte, 45, 59
 Atlas, 178
 Attis, 14
 Auletrides, 50

B.

Baal, 34
 Baal Peor, 21
 Baal-Shalisa, 34
 Babel, 34
 Bacchanalia, 67, 81
 Bacchants, 74
 Bacchus, 12, 17, 66, 74
 Bar of Isis, 158, 159
 Beth, 34
 Bethel, 170
 Bible, 19
 Birth control, 139, 212
 Brahma, 14, 39, 98
 Buffalo Dance, 204
 Butu-Ulishwa, 203

C.

Cabires, 66
 Cailasson, 87
 Canticles, vii
 Castration, 81, 201
 Cat, 163
 Cave, 161
 Celibacy, 148
 Censorship, 79
 Ceres, 39
 Christian Fathers, 78, 79, 148
 Christianity, 58
 Church sculptures, 106
 Church-symbolism, 184
 Circle, 156
 Circumcision, 23
 Cornwall Crosses, 182
 Corybantes, 66
 Covenant, 173
 Crescent Moon, 161, 168
 Cross, 17, 158, 160-161, 188-191, 194
 Crux Ansata, 16
 Cupid, 71, 81
 Cybele, 34, 66

D.

Dag, 35
 Dagger and Ring, 29
 Dahomey, 203
 Dancing girls, 86
 Dark Ages, 149
 Decar, 35
 De Sade, 210
 Diana, 56, 162
 Dieteriades, 50
 Dies Veneris, 35
 Dionysus, 14
 Dumblane Abbey, 185

E.

Easter, 164
 Easter eggs, 103

Eduth, 169
 Egyptian Religion, 8
 El, 29, 170
 Elohim, 166
Encyclopædia Biblica, 19, 40
 Esau, 36
 Esther, 61, 178

F.

Fables, 90
 Fakirs, 84, 87
 Fathers of the Church, 58
 Feast of Tabernacles, 13
 Fertility, 2
 Fig-leaves, 35
 Fish, 35, 185
 Flagellation, 15, 132
 Fotin, 110, 111
 Fricco, 101
 Frigga, 101

G.

Gauls, 101
 Great Mother, 38
 Grove, 22
 Guerlichon, 112
 Guignole, 112

H.

Hathor, 38
 Hebrew, 19, 25, 26
 Heliopolis, 61
 Herculaneum, 72
 Hermæ, 192
 Hermes, 57
 Hetaires, 50
 Hierapolis, 43
 Homosexuality, 206
 Horns, 12
 Hortanes, 102
 Horus, 8, 55
 Hymn to Jesus, 198

I.

IHVH, 29
 Indecent literature, 138
 Io, 11
 Iphianassa, 11
 Isis, 8, 39, 74

J.

Jacob, 36
 Jahveh, 29, 170, 171
 Jehovah, 24
 Jesus, 24
 Jew, 23, 27
 Jewish New Year's Day, 12
 Juggernaut, 88
 Juno, 14
 Jupiter, 12

K.

Kwan-yin, 180

L.

Legba, 202
 Liber (Pater Liber), 66
 Libera, 66
 Lingam, 8, 48, 83
 Lotus, 179
 Lupercalia, 70
 Lycurgus, 69
 Lydians, 63

M.

Mahadeo, 92, 96, 172
 Mahadeva, 89
 Maia, 39
 Mandrake, 108, 109
 Marco Polo, 140
 Marriage (Roman), 77
 Mary, 36
 Maypole, 181
 Mendes, 11, 14
 Mercury, 57
 Miriam, 36
 Mithra, 11, 46
 Monogamy, 146
 Moon, 162-165
 Mormonism, 143
 Moses, 12
 Mutinus, 66, 71, 72
 Mutuna, 72
 Mylitta, 59, 60
 Myrrha, 36
 Mystery Plays, 122-124
 Mystery Religions, 3

N.

Nagapontchie, 87
Nahbi, 39
N'keba, 33
Navel, 39, 40
Number Ten, 160

O.

Odin, 14
Old Testament, 27
Om, 166-168
Omphale, 33
Onida Community, 151-153
Ophites, 175
Osiris, 2, 7, 8, 9, 17, 74

P.

Paintings, 130
Palm Tree (*Tamar*), 41, 181
Pan, 11, 12, 57
Parthians, 63
Paul, 32
Peor, 21
Pertunda, 71, 72
Phallic Worship, 18
Phallophores, 114
Phallus, 8, 9, 10
Phrygia, 46
Pillar, 32
Plato, 70
Plays, 122
Polygamy, 142-146
Pomegranate, 35
Pompeii, 72
Pothin, 110
Prepuce, 137
Priapus, 12, 21, 55, 58
Priests of Isis, 73
Prints, 130
Pripe-Gala, 103
Prostitutes (Greece), 50
Prostitution, 121
Psycho-analysis, 139
Pulleiar, 85
Purim, 61, 178

Q.

Queen of Heaven, 39

R.

Ra, 9
Ras Shamra Tablets, 170
Religious Manuscripts, 131
Rhea, 44
Rod and Almond, 29
Rod of Moses, 169
Rosicrucians, 194

S.

Sacerdotal Celibacy, 134
Sacred Prostitution, 73
St. Augustine, 66
St. Come, 116
St. Damien, 117
St. Fiacre, 114
St. Gilles, 112
St. Guignolet, 59
St. Romain, 68
Sakti, 93, 99
Saviour of the World, 57
Secret Museum of Naples, 72
Semiramis, 44, 59
Serapis, 18
Serpent, 22, 95, 174-176
Set, 2
Sex-literature, 209-212
Shakers, 153
Shell, 37
Shield of David, 186
Sistrum, 159
Sita, 84
Siva, 14, 83, 84, 88, 89, 91, 93, 96
Siva-Durga, 92
Skopzi, 201
Song of Songs, vii
Spade, 195
Sparta, 69
Strabo, 54
Swastika, 187-188, 191
Symbols, 4, 10

T.

Tableaux Vivants, 121
Tau-cross, 158
Ters, 113, 114
Tortoise, 179

Towers, 182
 Tree Worship, 177
 Triangle, 186
 Trinity, 16, 170, 186-187
 Typhon, 2, 7, 8

U.

Uranus, 14
 Utah, 145

V.

Vendres, 68
 Venus, 34, 36, 48-64

Vernal Equinox, 10
 Vesta, 75
 Vestal Virgins, 75
 Vishnu, 14

Y.

Yod, 160
 Yoni, 30, 48, 83

Z.

Zachar, 33
 Zodiac, 10, 46, 86

